

BEFORE · VASSAR · OPENED

by

JAMES MONROE TAYLOR

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BEFORE VASSAR OPENED



C. L. Elliott, Pinx. 1861

MATTHEW VASSAR

BEFORE VASSAR OPENED

A CONTRIBUTION TO
THE HISTORY OF THE HIGHER
EDUCATION OF WOMEN
IN AMERICA

BY

JAMES MONROE TAYLOR



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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NOTE

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BEFORE VASSAR OPENED

I

AT THE SOUTH

THE movement for the higher education of women was so slow in enlisting the interest of the country that it is perhaps not surprising that no full history of it exists. For it was not only slow, but obscure, and came to large recognition only after the war, when a great gift constituted a college that could attract the attention of a people absorbed in other and more pressing interests. Since that time our interest has been focused on progress and results, rather than on origins, and history has been subordinated to prophecy. The details of the earlier record, moreover, must be sought in a scattered literature of small interest to any but special students, in catalogues, in government reports, in old newspapers, and in occasional histories of individual institutions and in biographies of leaders of more or less distinction.

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But we cannot continue content with the present or with our hopes, and must ask what early steps preceded what has seemed to most the sudden bursting of a new idea in the history of man. That Vassar's opening marked an epoch there can be no question, and the social and economic conditions that followed the Civil War responded immediately to the new opportunity; but the results could not have been so immediate and so encouraging had it not been for the efforts of many pioneers in the North and in the South.

The enthusiasm of these early leaders makes difficult often a just conclusion as to the degree of advance in these pioneer colleges. Often records have been destroyed, especially in case of some Southern institutions, and we are confronted with memories of that old and golden time of the early fifties or forties, or we have a few old catalogues which are suggestive of ideals rather than of actual performance, and whose gorgeous rhetoric leads one to pause at their claims. Even where the general evidence seems good for the enforcement of a worthy curriculum, we often find ourselves raising the

question as to the possibility of giving, under the well-known general conditions of the life of the time, in the South or in the West, an education that could fairly rank with that of the strong colleges of the East. When, for example, a small Western college publishes a curriculum in the early sixties equal to that of Harvard in 1870, what shall we think, even when we have the favorable witness of an occasional man trained in Yale or Harvard? Certainly these questions are not to be settled *a priori*, or by prejudice. With an open mind one must study faculty lists, equipment, libraries, and we must compare them, not with our present standards, but with those known to us as existent in the best colleges of that early period. We must also remember, always, how much determination, absorption in a great purpose, consecration to highest service, may weigh, in crudest conditions, against vastly better opportunities of youth of less purpose and of larger temptations to the squandering of time and work. But in the case of "females," or "ladies," in these early catalogues, we must also ask as to the courses opened to them, and

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the Ladies' Course, and the Teachers' Course, and the English Course we may be sure cover a multitude of concessions to lower standards, less preparation, and smaller results, than existed in the colleges for men. In dealing with college education for women, in the time preceding 1865, we are not seeking a history of *names*, but a record of education that compares favorably with that offered to young men in our better American colleges. Did such courses exist? Or, what efforts were made to offer and maintain them?

We are treating of *college* education, but something should be said at the outset regarding the efforts of several really great leaders who established successful seminaries, but whose vision and purpose were far beyond those of their contemporaries. Nothing can be properly written of the early work in America for the education of girls that does not express a tribute of praise to such women as Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon. These women were contemporaries, though Mary Lyon's Seminary at Holyoke (1837) dates from a later period than

Catharine Beecher's first school at Hartford (1822), or the Troy Seminary of Mrs. Willard (1821). But although a great work was accomplished by each of the three, the first place in the movement must be accorded to Emma Willard. Nothing in those early days compares in influence for women with the noble appeal which she issued from Middlebury, in 1819, to the general public, and especially to the legislature of the State of New York. Nothing in the history of education exceeds in pathos, or in scientific spirit, the tests which this young woman, wife of a college professor, made of her own "female brain," before attacking the large problem before her. Her famous "plan" contemplated no rash reforms, but based itself on an appeal for *women*, as such, indicating the demands for reform as shown by the defects of present education, her own project for a female seminary, and the resultant benefits to society. It is an enlightened, skillful document, aiming in the spirit of a true statesmanship at the best possible in existent conditions, pleading for a consistent and continuous course of education, and em-

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phasizing ably the physical and intellectual, moral and spiritual conditions essential to it. It would not satisfy the ideals of our time, nor was it meant to, but it was one of the chief influences that led to the better day. It was far beyond anything then proposed or known. Advocated by Adams, Jefferson, and other distinguished leaders, a bill passed the New York Senate granting to Mrs. Willard's Seminary at Waterford \$2000, but this failed in the Assembly. Troy raised by tax \$4000, and more by subscription, and Mrs. Willard opened there in 1821 the Seminary which has been successfully maintained ever since, and has now a larger promise than ever before through the munificence of its former pupil and teacher, Mrs. Russell Sage.

Catharine Beecher's work in Hartford, most enlightened and progressive, was transferred to Cincinnati in 1832. After two years, failing health compelled her to abandon it, but for many years she continued to influence public opinion through a National Board formed there by her.¹

¹ Cf. Boone, R. G., *Education in the United States*, p. 365.

Mary Lyon, a noble character and the creator of a noble work, has been more fortunate in having her name associated with a strong college which grew out of her seminary about twenty years ago. She saw distinctly the need to make a school financially independent and independent of its principal. She therefore sought a responsible Board, and she planned with it the same patient, systematic, solid course of study which she had already known in her experience at Ipswich. Her famous and long continued connection of household work with study was a plan formed solely in the interests of economy, though later she came to rejoice in the thing itself.¹ In 1837, after incredible effort and sacrifice, the seminary was opened. It established a three-year course, and its first entrance requirements were English grammar, modern geography, United States history, Watts on the Mind, and arithmetic.² Mary Lyon fore-saw a college, but she knew she had not established one.³ No degrees were given, but the

¹ Gilchrist, B. B., *The Life of Mary Lyon*, pp. 207-08.

² *Ibid.*, p. 265.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

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curriculum of the school in 1837-38¹ was certainly as advanced as some of the so-called "colleges" for girls in the South, though there is here an entire absence of mention of ancient or modern languages. How far this is from the standards of Oberlin, for example, which began about the same date, we shall shortly see. It was an immense advance in "female education," but it was not college education. Ten years later we find a requirement in Latin for entrance, and it is carried on through two of the three years of the course.² Mathematics was carried through Euclid, and there was the usual elementary history, science, and rhetoric, with a fair amount of logic, philosophy, and evidences — and the "Paradise Lost." French is also mentioned.

This may be taken as expressive of the highest course then feasible in our seminaries for girls. How far this sober and solid list of studies is from a well-organized college curriculum scarcely needs indication. This was the best, however, approximated or equaled, perhaps, in such institutions as Kent Hill, Maine;

¹ Gilchrist, *Mary Lyon*, App. C. ² *Ibid.*, App. C.

Granville, Ohio; Norton and Ipswich, Massachusetts; and Londonderry, New Hampshire.¹

Turning now to the colleges of the earlier era, we are confronted at once by the necessity of discriminating between the nominal and actual college, between the institutions that really aimed to do college work and those which laid great emphasis on the name of college and on the degree made possible by a charter, but had small regard for standards. Our progress may also perhaps be made clearer and more interesting if from the outset we separate the Northern and Southern colleges of that era, which were not only often differentiated markedly by their aims and their curricula, but present very diverse problems, as at the South the education of young women was all but universally separated from that of young men, while at the North, college education for girls, from economic and social reasons, was mostly coeducational.

When the State of Alabama was organizing its university in 1820, it planned for the edu-

¹ Cf. Boone, p. 366; cf. also, admission requirements at Michigan in 1841, Broome, E. C., *College Admission Requirements*, p. 44.

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cation of women, and further legislation was enacted in 1822 aiming to carry out the earlier provision. But though there seems to have been great interest in the matter, nothing was accomplished.¹ In 1830, the State Assembly petitioned Congress to grant land in each county for the establishment of an academy for female education, but Congress took no action — and though there were numbers of seminaries with power to grant diplomas and honors, there is no trace of a collegiate education at that time.

Here is the chief difficulty in our search: “colleges” abound, and even, in an occasional instance, the term “university” is applied to an institution of seminary grade. That has not yet ceased to be true, and we find a “college,” in recent years, advertising that it will aim to bring up its standards to those of the Committee of Ten — that is, to college admission rank. The reader of Mrs. Blandin’s “History of the Higher Education of Women in the South prior to 1860” is impressed by the diffi-

¹ Blandin, Mrs. J. M. E., *History of Higher Education of Women in the South prior to 1860*, pp. 61, 68.

culty of learning just what many of these ambitious institutions taught, though many, even private, schools, had the power to bestow diplomas and degrees. The great interest in many portions of the South, of even that early day, in the education of girls is notable, but the details seldom suggest standards comparable with such colleges as Oberlin and Hillsdale which admitted women at an early date. In Alabama, for example, besides the earlier interest suggested already, we find the Union Female College (Eufaula) granting degrees about 1860, and the Judson Female Institute, regarded as one of the strong schools of the State, from which Milo P. Jewett, afterward Vassar's first president, came to Poughkeepsie to take charge of a young ladies' seminary. In none of these Alabama institutions, however, do we find traces of a well-defined college curriculum.)

Only one earlier effort than the Alabama plan has come under our notice. Blount College, in Tennessee, afterward merged in the University,¹ which was established in 1794,

¹ Merriam, L. S., *Higher Education in Tennessee*, Bu-

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and paid its president fifty dollars per month as a salary, was coeducational for a while, a very rare thing in the South before the war.¹ I have been unable to discover a statement of the curriculum, thus far, or any indication of the extent to which young women availed themselves of the privilege offered them.

One of the most interesting indications of early interest is found in the establishment of Elizabeth Academy, Old Washington, Mississippi, in 1817, though it hardly sustains Mrs. Blandin's claim that this was the first State to provide college training for women. The academy was chartered as a college in 1819, and she states it had a college course of study.² No details of the course are at hand save in the reports of Mrs. Thayer, "Governess."³ This woman, apparently of great force and influence, was a New Yorker, but she certainly did not maintain a true college. The senior class studied, in Latin, Æsop's Fables, *Sacra Historia*, *Viri Romæ*, Cæsar; in science,

reau of Education, Circulars of Information, no. 5, 1893, p. 63.

¹ Merriam, p. 63. ² Blandin, p. 43. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 48 seq.

chemistry and natural philosophy; read mythology and history, and were taught moral and intellectual philosophy. This is a fair specimen of the curricula of the better schools, as we find traces of them from time to time. The completion of the course entitled the graduate to a diploma of parchment for the degree of *Domina Scientiarum*.¹

Mrs. Thayer appears again in Mississippi College, founded in 1830. Mayes says that two young women received degrees in 1832,² and Mrs. Blandin quotes the same statement from a contemporary newspaper,³ but nothing is said as to the nature of the degree, and Mrs. Thayer's presence is suggestive of a curriculum similar to that of the school she had just left. The present President writes that the records do not date back of 1836, but that the institution was coeducational. It was closed to girls in 1850. The stage of education reached is probably suggested by the gorgeously rhetorical tributes published by men of the

¹ Blandin, p. 48; cf. also Mayes, *History of Education in Mississippi*, Bureau of Education, Circulars of Information, no. 2, 1899, for full account of the school from 1818 to 1843.

² Mayes, p. 83.

³ Blandin, p. 187.

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neighborhood in connection with the work of Elizabeth Academy, one of whom states that there is probably no subject dearer to the patriot and the Christian philanthropist than that of female education.¹ This pardonable exaggeration reveals at least a keen interest in the subject at a very early date in our history.

Till we come to the two colleges of Georgia and Tennessee which call for more detailed notice, we find nothing better than this education suggested in Mississippi. Florida grants collegiate powers to the seminary at the capital in 1861, and a high school to prepare for this in three years, but it was the opening year of the war, and progress was impossible.² Louisiana displays great interest, but its colleges were at most equivalent to a high school. Kentucky presents numbers of colleges, often private enterprises, but no college curriculum; but in its old school at Science Hill, dating from 1825, shows how excellent a tradition may be maintained without collegiate assumptions. Texas shows admirable early efforts: a charter for

¹ Blandin, p. 53. ² Bureau of Education, Circular, p. 127.

Waco in 1860, on the basis of earlier schools, and Baylor, dating from 1845, made a college in 1867. North Carolina has its Salem Academy, over a century old, but incorporated with collegiate powers in 1866; and Greensboro College for Women, chartered in 1838, but beginning work only in 1847, graduating 191 up to 1863, of whose curriculum we find no trace. South Carolina had a Johnston Female University, named from its Chancellor who presided over it from 1850 to the war, denominational, with degree-conferring powers; Greenville College, from 1854; Columbia College for Girls, 1856 to 1863; but of the quality of their work we find no trace. A most interesting detail is furnished by the history of Dr. Mark's School at Barhamville, established about 1815. It progressed steadily and was incorporated as a college in 1832. From 1850 to 1861 its annual outlay for teachers, who were chiefly drawn from the North, was from \$12,000 to \$14,000, a large sum at that time. It had a chaplain and, to guard against sectarianism, filled the office annually from varying denominations. It was a private school

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of high grade and throws a clear light on the standards of higher education in 1850.¹

Maryland had its Kee Mar College, founded in 1851, though its scheme of study is suggestive of little thorough work.² Virginia gives us no school of college rank. Missouri yet has colleges which serve as schools admitting to its university — and one can hardly hope that its Christian College, chartered in 1851, or the Baptist College for Women, at Lexington, 1855, had attained a substantial collegiate standard.

Two of the women's colleges in the South, in this early era, have gained prominence above most by virtue of their rank or by discussion growing out of their degree-conferring powers. The more prominent of these is the Georgia Female College, now the Wesleyan Female College of Macon, Georgia.

The college was chartered in 1836, under the former name, and graduated its first class in 1840, and there was no break in its history even during the war. It claims to be "the oldest regularly chartered institution for con-

¹ Blandin, pp. 260-72.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 179 *seq.*

ferring degrees upon women in America, if not in the entire world."¹ If this claim can be substantiated at all, it must be by placing emphasis on the college for *women*, the separate college, as we have already seen the Mississippi College conferring degrees several years before the Macon institution was founded. The Georgia College, however, has been proclaimed as the oldest chartered for women, and we are properly curious to know all we may of its history. Unhappily its early records were destroyed by fire, and it is difficult to discover, with any exactness, the details that most interest us.

In 1825 a bill was offered to the Legislature providing for female education, but it failed of passage.² The effort was renewed in 1834, and great interest was awakened in the community, and in 1838 a president was elected and the college opened January 7, 1839. The college had professors of literature, mathematics, the natural sciences, but there is no mention in Jones's account of a chair of the classics: the

¹ Letter from the President, October, 1910.

² Jones, C. E., *Education in Georgia*, Bureau of Education, Circulars of Information, no. 4, 1888, pp. 92, 93.

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rest of the faculty named seem to be connected with the preparatory department or with music. It is stated that \$85,000 were spent on the building which is described and illustrated in the work referred to.¹ The institution was unhappily sold for debt very soon, and was reincorporated in 1843 as the Wesleyan Female College. Such is the brief outline of the external history of its first years.

President Ainsworth is authority for the statement² that in the beginning there was a professor of modern languages, and one of ancient languages — and these are probably to be identified with the professors of literature mentioned above. From an old paper, Dr. Ainsworth gives a résumé of the studies pursued by the senior class, as follows: "Natural philosophy, mental and moral philosophy, astronomy, botany as connected with chemistry, physiology and geology, history, ancient and modern languages."

We have no details whatever, and the description in general is true of the Elizabeth Academy, already referred to, and the glimpse

¹ Jones, p. 96. ² Letter to the writer, October 6, 1910.

of a curriculum there offered. It would be most interesting to know what classics were read, and how much was done in modern languages, for example. The science was probably that then taught in the general and generous way which characterized most of the institutions of that era. With every wish to find some indications here of an advance beyond the other institutions of that time, like the Mississippi College, we are baffled by the want of records. One indication, however, furnished in Mrs. Blandin's book¹ suggests that the first graduates were not of a rank that Oberlin would have called collegiate. She says that the first graduating class, in 1840, was formed of the pupils of Mr. Slade, of the Clinton Female Institute, who went with him to the new college in 1839. From what we know of these institutes we cannot safely infer that a single year on their foundation would have been equivalent, at that time, to the standards of the better colleges of the country. We cannot accept the statement of Mr. Edwards,²

¹ Page 131.

² *Century Magazine*, vol. 18, p. 159, "The First Female College."

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that its course was equal to that offered by "most contemporary colleges for men." We shall see, when we examine the curriculum of Oberlin at that time, and women were admitted there, what a definite and strong course of study had been outlined, and we cannot think that this early course of "Georgia Female," which permitted the graduation, after a single year, of eleven young women who had come over from a seminary, even approximated it in range or exactness. All honor to these early efforts, but let us value them justly in whatever light we may gain from their imperfect records.

The story of that first commencement has been written. In "Success," September, 1903, Mrs. Benson (*née* Brewer), then living, was said to be the recipient on July 18, 1840, of "the first diploma ever issued by a chartered woman's college," "the first woman in all the wide world to be graduated from the first chartered college for women."

At the semi-centennial celebration, Mrs. Benson "bore in her hand the very document she had received from their predecessors [the Trustees] and returned to them the diploma

for preservation among the sacred relics of the college." As the claim to the priority of a degree is influenced by the form of the diploma, it may be reproduced here.

Testimonial of the Georgia Female College

The President, as the representative of the Faculty of the Georgia Female College, gives this Testimonial that Miss Katharine E. Brewer, having passed through a regular course of study in that institution embracing all the sciences which are usually taught in the colleges of the United States that refer and appropriately belong to female education in its most ample range, was deemed worthy of the first degree conferred by this institution, and accordingly it was conferred upon her on July 18, 1840.

In testimony of which the signatures of the President and Faculty and the seal of the College are hereto affixed.

GEORGE F. PEARCE,
President.

W. H. ELLISON,
Professor Mathematics.

THOMAS B. SLADE,
Professor Natural Science.

We mark here the claim that a degree is conferred. It has been questioned whether this is any more than a diploma. Mrs. Benson, who

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survived till 1908, and whose mind was perfectly clear, writes the President (to Dr. King, President of Oberlin), always insisted that the degree of A.B. was regularly conferred upon her. However, it is very strange that the particular degree is not mentioned in this only contemporary account. It is interesting to note, also, that no professor of "literature" signs the diploma, and that sciences alone are referred to in it. It suggests the earlier "diploma of parchment" of Elizabeth Academy, and its degree Domina Scientiarum, and raises again the query as to the particular degrees conferred by Mississippi College eight years earlier than this. Two years before this, in 1838, Miss Zeruiah Porter completed a four years' course at Oberlin, in the Young Ladies' Department, and received a diploma, and the course of study published in the early catalogues of Oberlin suggests a far more strenuous training than we infer from our scattered glimpses of the course at Georgia. We shall see that it was not till 1841 that women graduated in the full and strong course at Oberlin with the A.B. degree.

If Mrs. Benson's memory was correct, the A.B. of Georgia was conferred earlier; but if her diploma was regarded as the expression of a degree, unspecified, as the language would imply, then even in a formal sense Georgia's degree was not the first. And if, as the language quoted would seem to suggest, the reference is not to a degree to *women*, but to the *earliest institution* chartered separately and distinctly for women, thus excluding Mississippi and Oberlin, it is still of interest to inquire whether degrees were not conferred earlier by such colleges as Dr. Mark's at Barhamville, South Carolina (*College* in 1832); or Columbia Institute (1836) which gave diplomas, and had power to grant degrees; or Elizabeth Academy, which promised with its "diploma of parchment" the degree of D.S. The question is solely of historic interest, and it is perhaps not likely, with our lack of records, that we can settle it finally.

The other college, founded expressly for women, that calls for particular notice, is the Mary Sharp College of Winchester, Tennessee, known also as the Tennessee and Alabama

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Female Institute, and dating from 1851. Happily its early catalogues are preserved, and correspondence with its oldest graduate and with a member of its earliest faculty, enables us to gain a definite view of its curriculum and its equipment. There were twelve Trustees beside the President, Secretary, and Treasurer, according to the Catalogue of 1853-54. The faculty numbered four. To the President alone the catalogue gives a degree, A.M., and the Baptist Cyclopedias indicates that he was not a college graduate. But Zelotes C. Graves, a Vermonter, was a vital force in education, with ideals and ambitions. The professor of mathematics, the Reverend J. Manton, was a recent graduate of Brown University. He is still living, at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and his testimony is valuable as to the quality of the work of the new college. He had been compelled to go South on account of his health, and while at Nashville was asked to accept this professorship. His letter¹ makes clear that he had a predecessor, "a very enthusiastic teacher of mathematics," and he

¹ To the writer, December 5, 1910.

found "his classes in good condition." He served but a year, when he returned to preaching, and he records that "some of my classes did remarkably well. There were young ladies whose attainments could compare very favorably with classes at Brown." There was also a professor of Latin and ancient history, the President's wife, and a teacher of the preparatory department. There were 4 seniors, 6 juniors, 19 sophomores, 30 freshmen, 22 irregular students, 97 preparatory. Out of 178, 141 were from Tennessee. The freshmen began algebra and Latin and geometry and Rollin's "Ancient History." The sophomores completed algebra, geometry, trigonometry, read Virgil, commenced Greek, had history, ancient and mediæval, and botany. The juniors had conic sections, Cicero, mathematical philosophy, demonstrative philosophy, modern history, Greek Testament, astronomy, experimental chemistry. The seniors had Horace, the Acts in Greek, logic, mental and moral philosophy, rhetoric, United States history, elements of criticism, geology, physiology. Through the course, elocution, reading,

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spelling, defining, penmanship were required. "Valuable and expensive apparatus, charts, a valuable geological cabinet and a very good collection of shells" were stated among the facilities of the college for its work. Here at least is a curriculum, a definitely outlined plan of study, and here is a requirement of Greek. It was a serious effort to reach far beyond the seminaries of the early fifties, and to approach the standards of the Northern colleges. It is interesting to read what is claimed by this earnest pioneer from Vermont.

He aims to give girls "an education as thorough as their brothers have been acquiring at their colleges and universities." He lays great stress on "permanency." "It is no private school." It is "a school for young ladies of a higher grade than any previously known to exist — in fact, a college, where ladies may have the privilege of a classical education." He makes an impassioned plea for women, "for the same knowledge, literary, scientific, and classical, that has been for so many generations the peculiar and cherished heritage of the other sex, for the placing of the sister

on an equality with the brother, for the developing and unfolding of all the qualities of her mind, thus making her what she was designed to be by her Creator, a thinking, reflecting, reasoning being, capable of comparing and judging for herself and dependent upon none other for her free unbiased opinions."

The Catalogue makes the further claim that "when woman is thus completely educated the axe will be laid at the root of all evil and a new era will begin to dawn on the human race"; and the writer breaks out into the well-worn verses of Pope: "A little learning is a dangerous thing," etc.

The building was seventy-five feet long, forty wide, three stories high, and with it the Trustees felt impelled to claim that "this Institute is prepared to offer advantages superior to any school in the South and West." Such a boast would carry no weight but for its published curriculum — and evidently the authors of the Catalogue of 1853-54 were not thinking of the institutions to the north of them, at Oberlin, or Hillsdale, or Ann Arbor, or the young Antioch at Yellow Springs.

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The freshmen paid \$24, the seniors \$36. Music, needlework, drawing, and painting are extras. A diploma costs \$5. The boarding department charged \$8 a month, including all expenses. The students must rise at five, and never be up later than ten. To leave their boarding-house “to spend nights or leisure days, permission from one of the *male* members of the faculty” is essential! “A short moral lecture” is given every morning at chapel by the President “upon some text of Scripture.”

The Catalogue of 1858 shows a president and three professors, a woman, still, in Latin, with others for preparatory work, music, etc.; altogether twelve. There are now 120 in the four college classes. The changes are not very marked in the curriculum, but the Greek has advanced, so that the juniors read the Iliad, and the seniors the Memorabilia. Livy alternates with Cicero for the juniors. The library has 500 volumes, the charge for the use of which is fifty cents a session.

The institution deserves a few more words on its history. It was closed during the war, from 1861 to 1865; was “the headquarters of the

Federal soldiers, and much abused," says Mrs. Embrey, the first graduate (Nannie Merri-deth), to whose kindness the catalogues and other material bearing on this history are due. After the war, in 1868, we find Z. C. Graves still President, 78 in college classes, 6 seniors. This catalogue gives a list of graduates from 1855, 73 to 1863, inclusive. The changes in the curriculum are few, and generally in the direction of advance. The rule as to permissions from "male professors" stands, but the "male" has become "gentlemen"! An appeal is made for a library to replace that destroyed by the war. Two thousand volumes had been given.

The Catalogue of 1881-82 shows Z. C. Graves still President, and now an LL.D. Alas! the Catalogue prints this against his name, and two others, as L. L. D.! Unhappily, this late Catalogue has developed a boastful spirit. "If there is a school for women, North or South, that can boast of a corps of teachers so renowned for culture and skill in the science of true teaching, we have not been able to discover it." Yet Vassar had been opened

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fifteen years, and Smith and Wellesley five! There is a less convincing air about this late Catalogue, suggestive of a harder battle and a losing fight, and it is to be regretted that after its worthy stand, Mary Sharp ceased to be. It was veritably a pioneer, ten years before Vassar, and although its curriculum in general was much less developed than Vassar's, it must be remembered that it was far less favorably conditioned. It claims to be the first college for women that required both Greek and Latin for the A.B. degree, and if the coeducational institutions like Oberlin are omitted from the category of "colleges for women," this may well be so.¹ It was certainly the most developed curriculum of which we find clear evidence, ten years before Vassar opened, among the colleges for women in the South, and at that date there were no separate institutions for women in the North that claimed collegiate rank. The South was earnest and ambitious, but the history of women's higher education there, before the war, is one of

¹ Cf. Commissioner Eaton's letter, p. 247; Merriam, *History of Education*, Bureau of Education.

effort without endowment, of curricula scant in comparison with those of Oberlin, Lombard, and Hillsdale — the faculty in many so-called colleges consisting chiefly of the principal and his wife, the school a private institution with the power of granting degrees. Dr. Lillian Johnson said in 1908¹ that there were fifty-five colleges in the South before Vassar, though no word regarding degrees excepting from the institution at Macon. The need of qualifying this has been pointed out, and the survey of the whole field must leave on our minds the conviction that there was very little *collegiate* education of *women* in the South before the war, judged by the standards of the better colleges of that day. We shall see, indeed, as we study the curriculum of Oberlin at an even earlier date, that there was nothing equivalent to it offered to women, North or South, before 1850. At the best, a mere handful of women represented collegiate education in the South in 1865; and there was no general movement there at any earlier day that could sustain an institution of veritable college rank as judged

¹ Report of Conference of Education in the South.

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by the standards of the time. There is no trace of considerable endowments, of large libraries, of generous equipment. There was effort, occasional large vision, widespread interest in a general seminary education, but seldom high standards and the public opinion that would sustain them. We honor the pioneers and their high accomplishment — but we honor them none the less because we view their labors in the white light of the actual educational conditions and opinion of that era. If there could be any question in the mind of a reader, appreciative of the spirit and enthusiasm of these earlier efforts, it must be set at rest by a perusal of the list of requirements of our Northern colleges in 1840 to 1850. Michigan, for example, opened in 1841, with six students (men), in a new country, and with weaker requirements than those of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia; but Michigan asked for *entrance*, geography, arithmetic, elements of algebra, grammar of English, Latin and Greek languages, the exercises and reader of Andrews, Cornelius Nepos, Vita Washingtonii, Sallust, Cicero's Orations, Jacob's Greek

Reader, and the Evangelists.¹ It would be a generation before any *woman's college* could secure such a preparation for its classes — and these were substantially increased at Michigan six years later (1847). But this institution was not opened to women, — and to learn the best that was anywhere offered to them we must turn now to the college at Oberlin.

¹ Broome, *College Admission Requirements*, p. 44.

II

AT THE NORTH

THE Oberlin Collegiate Institute was opened in 1833, with full college privileges, though its name was not changed to Oberlin College till 1850. It is not for us to recite its great history, but we must glance at it so far as it bears on the privileges of education given to American girls. It offered them its opportunities from the beginning. Its first Catalogue (1834), not printed in Oberlin, speaks of it as an "infant institution," "in the wilderness," on a site which a year and a half before was uninhabited and surrounded by a forest three miles square. Of its twelve trustees four were "colonists." There is a professor of languages, of chemistry, botany, and physiology, a principal of a preparatory department, but as yet no President, though it is said that this position and the professorship of natural philosophy will probably be filled in the spring. The college had opened in December.

The female department was regarded as separate.¹ It promised "instruction in the useful branches taught in the best female seminaries." The higher classes may enjoy the privileges of the higher departments "as shall best suit their sex and prospective employment," but the female seminary is not regarded as equal to the college. The catalogue of students is divided into "males" and "females." Both sexes are required to labor four hours daily, for reasons of health, moral benefit, and pecuniary help. There is a farm of 800 acres, sawmill, gristmill, workshop. Living is cheap. "Hitherto board with its appendages has been from 80 cents to \$1 per week." Tuition is from \$10 to \$14 a year. The board is now reduced to from 75 cents to \$1. Rent of room and furniture, "with contingencies," is from \$3 to \$6 — the annual expenses from \$58 to \$89, "exclusive of clothing and slight expenses for postage, etc." Students earn variously from 1 cent an hour to $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents.² They usually receive 4, 5, 6, or 7 cents an hour, by which they may generally pay their board.

¹ Catalogue of 1834, p. 6.

² Catalogue of 1834, p. 9.

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“Healthy and industrious females understanding domestic economy receive their board with its appendages for four hours’ daily labor.” There was one rule for rich and poor, with insistence on plain dress and wholesome diet, and there was to be no endurance of drones in “this hive of industry.” Sixty-three males and 37 females made up the 100 students, and more than 90 were over 14 years and most of these over 18.

In the appendix, number 2, to the second report,¹ entitled “Female department,” it is said that they board at the public table, do domestic work, washing, ironing, and much of the sewing for the students, and attend recitations with the young gentlemen in all of the departments. The applicants are so numerous that they have been obliged to send away about half of those seeking entrance. “Most of the ladies have paid for their board by their labor,” says the Catalogue, “75 cents for vegetable diet only, 87½ cents with animal food once a day.”

The Catalogue of 1836 shows no women in

¹ Catalogue of 1835.

the *collegiate* department, but now, placed after the preparatory department of the boys, "young ladies" appear in place of the earlier "females." There is one senior in the female department. The course of study given is good in philosophy and literature, but without mention of languages except for those designing the full course, and then only Greek, with a view to the New Testament. The girls are told that they must not come till they have written and been accepted. "None can be received who travel on the Sabbath on their way to Oberlin." Prices are now slightly higher and the work requirement is reduced to three hours.

In 1837 no catalogue was issued, but in 1838 there are 391 students in all departments, and Zeruiah Porter appears alone in the fourth year of the "ladies' department." Evidently the course is lengthened. But at the end of the list appears for the first time "college courses," "freshman class," with four girls registered in it, and three preparatories for college. Here is a distinct epoch in the education of girls, for though the young ladies attend the college

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department when their studies permit, the course is not nearly equal to the collegiate, in general. Now, for the first time, we have four girls entered under a strong college curriculum.

Here is the place to review the actual status of Oberlin, in those first years, toward woman's higher education. Mrs. Sewall claims that the college was not fitted to give the same advantages to women as to men,¹ and dwells on the emphasis on the seminary and the evident purpose at first to offer separate instruction to girls. Very probably there was serious question with many then as to coeducation, and there are traces of this in the first catalogue, perhaps, but the pioneer and economic conditions forced what they were quite ready to accept. They were familiar with the old New England school, and the simple, wholesome life they knew kept in the background the questions forced by a more complex and developed society; the economic considerations were compelling, the attitude of the minds of the founders was an open and receptive one —

¹ *Woman's Work*, p. 67.

and so gradually and inevitably, after only a few years of growth, we find girls admitted to the full college course. The ladies' course continued to be far more popular, but the principle and the right were established, and there was a continuous if small line of girls who availed themselves of the larger opportunities.¹

The ladies' course required one year of preparation against three for the college, and it carried no degree. As regards the college standards of Oberlin at this early date there can be no fair question. Asa Mahan was President from 1835. Charles Finney then appears as professor of theology. The course in that year, which they regarded "as neither perfect nor immutable," included the Greek Testament, the Cyropædia and Memorabilia, Cicero and Buchanan's Psalms in Latin, Hebrew, abundant mathematics and science, political economy and law, evidences, the analogy, logic, rhetoric, and some literature and history. This was gradually strengthened,

¹ Cf. also Knight and Commons, *History of Higher Education in Ohio*, Bureau of Education, Circulars of Information, no. 5, 1891, p. 64.

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and in the first catalogue published at Oberlin itself (1839), the second year of the first college girls, appears a comparison in parallel columns of the courses at Oberlin and Yale, "in order that the Christian public may be enabled to judge us fairly." "No unfriendly feeling toward that venerable seat of learning has led us to present this comparison," but the purpose is to meet those who have "decried" the Oberlin course.

The courses are similar and the influence of Yale is most evident. In science and literature the difference is negligible, and if Yale gives more Latin, Oberlin gives more Greek and Hebrew.¹ The students for the ministry are more in mind at Oberlin.

As bearing on the amount of work done it may be added that the juniors were then reciting five pages of Demosthenes at a recitation. We cannot leave out of sight, in our estimate of the work accomplished in conditions that we should now regard as raw, inchoate,

¹ Catalogue of 1839-40. See transcription of these courses, etc., in Dr. King's letter to the writer, November 4, 1910. Cf. also Knight and Commons, p. 69.

and lacking in the finer graces of life, the prodigious earnestness of the men and women who were not only making a college, but who were devoting themselves to the highest interests of State and Nation, and who were exalting mental labor in a way to shame the college generation of to-day.

But the college girls at Oberlin were not numerous in the days preceding the epoch marked by the opening of Vassar. Seventy-nine received the A.B. degree up to 1865,¹ and 290 had passed through the ladies' course. This was of far inferior grade, as may be seen from the list of studies in the Catalogue of 1839, and was designed to meet the demands made upon the "seminaries" of that day.

Young ladies in college must conform to the general regulations of the female department.² In 1842-43, for the first time every class has girls in it, a total of 29. This catalogue prints a list of graduates from the opening of the college, numbering *three women*, in 1841. Now begins the charge for tuition, twenty dollars a year, compelled by the losses of their friends by

¹ Dr. King's letter.

² Catalogue of 1841.

the great fire in New York in 1835. "In no year have the Trustees been able to pay the salaries of the professors."

There is no call for us to follow through later catalogues the fluctuating numbers of *college* girls, from 1850-51, when Charles Finney became President, when there were no junior or sophomore "ladies" and only 1 freshman, or 1856-57, when there were 20 ladies in college and 229 in the ladies' course, to 1861-62, when 33 ladies were numbered, the largest in any year noted to this date, but when the ladies' course numbered 213. The Catalogue of 1861-62 lists 46 men at the war — and these lists are now printed regularly and under a separate head.

It chances that we have from the very year of Vassar's opening, 1865, the testimony of an eyewitness, an intelligent English teacher, regarding several American colleges, and happily Oberlin is one of them.¹ Her impressions, gained in a ten days' sojourn, give a clear and sympathetic picture. The two sexes, including

¹ Sophia Jex Blake, *Visit to Some American Schools and Colleges*, London, 1867.

the preparatories, were about equally divided, and about a third of the total she thought colored.¹ Oberlin had disregarded color as well as sex in its welcome to its pupils since 1834. In that year, 1865, Miss Blake says the only woman graduate was originally a slave who had not yet fully paid her ransom. Only 17 women were in college,² and 175 in the ladies' course. The grade of work seemed to her inferior to that of the Eastern colleges, though the results were invaluable "to the class of students seeking instruction" and "very likely adequate to the demand in the West."³ It must never be forgotten, however, by the student of education, that those years of the war, and just after, were a period of strain and stress to almost all American colleges, and it may easily be that the earlier strenuousness of Oberlin had abated perforce. The curriculum continued to be substantially that just referred to.

¹ Sophia Jex Blake, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18. Miss Blake's testimony may be accepted with caution, though the word of a skilled, intelligent traveler. President King writes that several women graduated that year. See *Quinquennial Catalogue*.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.

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Miss Blake was much impressed by the conditions of society, unlike anything known to England. The deficiency of polish of manner she thought might be termed national, but the absence of social inequality, of all strain after pretensions of a higher class, and so the temptation to essential vulgarity, impressed her as much as the absence of standards and of consciousness of social lack. Roughness of manners in the attitude of students during class hours, and the incessant spitting, seemed to her more marked at Oberlin than elsewhere. The lagging behind the actual degree of study and learning of all the exterior accessories of civilization, struck her everywhere. But the girls, as a rule, "seemed considerably more civilized than the young men." "Teachers and professors seemed to belong to exactly the same order as the majority of the pupils," — though some had traveled intelligently.

The religious spirit, the desire for revivals, the custom of opening every recitation with hymn or prayer, impressed her unpleasantly, especially the combination of "All hail the

power of Jesus' name" with "the physical functions," in a class in physiology.

She comments on the absence of provision for physical exercise, and of a gymnasium, but we may not forget the compulsory labor. There were no sports — and a seeming absence of vitality was noted generally.

As to the great question of coeducation, Miss Blake¹ remarks that there is no common life to the girls and men out of the classroom, no walking together, even from prayer meetings, and in class and at chapel they sit separately. But the testimony given her as to equality of ability and work seemed to her ample.

A second institution in Ohio that gained great fame through the circumstances of its founding and through the connection with it of Horace Mann, was at Yellow Springs, Antioch, so called, Miss Blake says, because founded by the Christian sect.² It was, however, non-sectarian. Antioch College was opened October 5, 1853. It was coeducational, and Horace Mann made a point of having "female" as

¹ Blake, p. 36 *seq.*

² Cf. Acts xi, 26.

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well as “male” professors. The scenes of the opening days of this college, the wretched physical conditions with which it had to struggle, the heroic labors of Horace Mann, the astonishing enthusiasm excited for education, are beyond our present theme, but are well known to readers of the biography of that great pioneer and President who organized and developed the institution. Mann died in 1859 and the second President was Dr. Hill, who was called later to preside over Harvard. The college department was closed in 1862 because of pecuniary difficulties and the drawing off of the men to the war. It was reopened in 1865, the preparatory classes having been maintained in the interval.

The spirit of the work here was beyond praise, and President Hill assured Miss Blake that the undergraduates of Antioch were generally able to enter corresponding classes at Harvard. It is to be observed, however, that a “teachers’ course,” as well as an “English course,” was offered, and that Greek was optional, for the accommodation of female students. Physics could be substituted for it.

An article in the "Nation,"¹ signed "S.," a professor at Antioch, expresses the opinion that the women are not equal to the men, and that the men are not as strong in ambition and mental power as those who seek the better Eastern colleges. He is, however, a firm believer in coeducation. One cannot examine the tables furnished by "S." without remarking the very small proportion of graduates to the number of students, which he furnishes from 1856-57 to 1865-66. The totals of the earlier catalogues must include all departments, probably even the preparatory. In 1853-54 he gives 253 "gentlemen" and 98 "ladies," and in 1857-58 the ladies are 158 as against 252 gentlemen. It would be interesting to know if the panic occasioned the reduction from 401 "gentlemen" in 1856-57. Certainly the numbers fell after Mann's death, and the result of the war on the college has already been noted. In 1861-62 there were 121 "gentlemen" and 77 "ladies," but the graduates were respectively 6 and 8. There were no men graduated from 1862 to 1865, but a woman is noted in

¹ Vol. 11, p. 24.

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1862-63 and 1863-64. The total number of women graduates in these tables of "S.," from 1856 to 1865 (when Vassar opened), is 28, though it is not clear to me whether all these had completed the full college course. Miss Blake's testimony fails us here, as her visit was just after the reopening of the college, in October, 1865. Ex-President Derby¹ gives the totals, presumably to 1890, as 173 men and 59 women.

As to the course of study exacted of these girls, we have the testimony of President Hill, quoted by Miss Blake, the statements of "S.," and the full courses of study printed by Miss Blake² from what she *thinks* was the last prospectus issued during the presidency of Dr. Hill, 1861-62, just before the college closed on account of the war. She supposes it substantially the same as that pursued in 1865. The freshman class studied algebra, geometry, surveying and navigation, Livy and Horace, Anabasis, Iliad, Memorabilia; or, as optional with Greek, history of the fall of the Empire

¹ *History of Education in Ohio*, Bureau of Education, Circulars of Information, no. 5, 1891, p. 133.

² *Visit*, etc., pp. 139 seq.

and of the Middle Ages, lectures on botany, on the conduct of the understanding (by the President); a term of French (begun), and English language and elocution (in second term). The sophomores had analytical geometry and the calculus, Latin and French (or Greek), logic, lectures (by the President) on taste, imagination, and art, and a term of German. The juniors had physics, chemistry, physiology, astronomy, mineralogy, German, Latin (much prose composition), Italian (optional with German in second term), and lectures by the President on practical ethics. The seniors had political economy, logic, comparative physiology, intellectual philosophy, moral philosophy, natural theology, evidences, constitutional law, geology, Guizot's "Histoire de la Civilization en Europe." Rhetorical exercises and English composition were required at stated periods during the course.

Here is assuredly a worthy curriculum, of full collegiate grade as that was understood from 1850 to 1870, at which later date we mark a new era in American college requirements.¹

¹ Cf. Broome, *College Admission Requirements*, p. 47.

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The teachers' course¹ omits Latin and Greek, gives a year of French and two terms of German, follows the freshman course in mathematics, has a term of history, and two of physics, one of botany, logic, rhetoric, a smattering of science, and the lectures noted on practical ethics, taste, etc. It required but two years, and was little more than an advanced seminary course.

The "English course" occupies *three* years, but it is a merely preparatory course, not equal to that of the better seminaries for women.²

College education for women at Antioch must be understood, then, as referring solely to the full collegiate course. The other courses were not of college grade.

As bearing at once on the standards of admission to the college and on the earnestness of the students, it may be added that the preparatory department gave a three years' course, and offered preparation in less time for those who could do the work. It must be remembered, however, that the preparation

¹ Blake, p. 144 *seq.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 146-48.

was for the college of the "fifties," and not to meet the requirements of to-day.

A few words should be added regarding the other coeducational colleges of Ohio. They were numerous, chiefly on denominational foundations, meager for the most in equipment, lacking endowments, but marked by earnestness within their range.

The State College at Athens apparently did not admit women till after the war,¹ and Miami was for men only.² Marietta also does not seem to have admitted women, though it had made sound progress and had gathered a library of 17,000 volumes by 1860. Western Reserve did not admit women till 1872.

Otterbein had coeducation in 1849. Its standards were apparently low.³ Muskingum was incorporated in 1837, and young women were admitted to all its privileges in 1854. The scientific course, to which they inclined for the most part, was a year less than the classical. The patronage and support were wholly local.⁴ Franklin College, 1825, has a woman on the

¹ Ohio University *Bulletin*, October, 1910, p. 29.

² Knight and Commons, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

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faculty, in the lists given in Knight and Commons's "History," but nothing is said there of coeducation. Mount Union, called a "Cosmic College," was chartered in 1858, was coeducational and gave all degrees. Urbana, College of the New Church, graduated girls as early as 1857. Heidelberg, 1851, had a ladies' course, and a few girls in the classical course.¹

Others were coeducational schools, which at a later date became colleges, as Hiram, Baldwin, Buchtel, Wooster, Wilmington. Denison was a college in 1845, but not coeducational.

Of most of these it may probably be said with justice that they did a great service in exciting and meeting ambition for education; that they were the first sources of the inspiration of many men and women who later made a deep impression on their generation; but that the results were due rather to the earnestness of teacher and taught than to any strongly maintained college curriculum or any substantial college equipment. And in the light of the clear statistics of Oberlin and Antioch, we must infer that the number of girls graduated by these colleges was very

small. They betoken a local interest in a fair education, and a liberal spirit which willingly shared its best with the young women who sought it.

Two institutions founded especially for girls call for a more particular notice. The Ohio Wesleyan Female College was founded in Delaware in 1853 and absorbed in the University in 1877. Its course was apparently not equal *then* to that of the college.¹ We have no full statement of its curriculum, though the numbers in attendance were good in 1853-54. But as it had only reached a point in 1877 when its *modified* course led to an inferior degree at Delaware (B.L.), and the requirements for it were considerably lower than those for A.B. or B.S., it is altogether unlikely that a college standard was really maintained from 1853 to 1865.

The Wesleyan Female College of Cincinnati was organized by the Methodist denomination, and was incorporated in 1842-43. In 1852, 47 resident graduates represented classes from 1847. The third class organized an Alumnae

¹ Knight and Commons, p. 82.

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Association, and in 1853 the word “Alumna” was coined for them. Dr. Rachel L. Body, afterward Dean of the Philadelphia Woman’s Medical College, was one of the committee which suggested the word.¹ The first commencement, 1845, sent out 6 graduates, in 1846 there was 1, in 1860, 33, the largest class. The building was sold for debt in 1892.

The degrees given were M.E.L. (Mistress of English Literature) and M.L.A. (Mistress of Liberal Arts), the latter including a course in Latin, Greek, and advanced mathematics. Later, but it is uncertain when, the degree was changed to A.B.

But what were the standards of this college? From Mrs. Mullikin, a graduate, and from “The Alumna,” 1890–1900, such answer as can be made has been obtained. There was much interest in the subject, fostered by Catherine Beecher’s efforts; by the formation and labors of the College of Teachers, composed not only of teachers of Cincinnati but of the Mississippi Valley, whose committee

¹ *Commerical Tribune*, April 21, 1909; letter from Mrs. Katharine Mullikin.

numbered in it such names as Lyman Beecher and Calvin Stowe; and by the publication of resolutions in favor of a more liberal female education; but the first definite steps were taken by the Methodists, in this foundation.

By 1843-44, the college, "incorporated by the Legislature," as the title-page of the catalogue declares, "with collegiate powers and privileges," offered to its senior class, Day's Mensuration, Wayland's Moral Science, Burritt's Geography of the Heavens, Abercrombie's Moral Feelings, Hedge's Logic, Keith, on the Globes, Mrs. Lincoln's Botany, Alexander's Evidences, Latin, closing with Cooper's Virgil, and Greek, closing with Greek Testament; French, German, and Spanish were the modern languages taught.¹

If the Latin and Greek were required of all graduates, this would put the requirements for graduation distinctly above the best seminaries of 1845, as exemplified by Troy and Mount Holyoke, but not nearly as high as Mary

¹ Quoted from Mrs. Mullikin's letter, October 22, 1910, in which she says, "The course of study for the senior year includes," as above.

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Sharp in 1853, and distinctly not equivalent to the demands of Oberlin and Antioch, the former in 1839 and the latter in 1851. This must, however, be regarded as one of the definitely higher efforts of that era to establish a worthy collegiate course. The lack of endowments, the want of earlier preparation, and general social conditions seem to have made it quite impossible to maintain strong collegiate standards outside of the better coeducational colleges.)

The decade from 1850 to 1860 was very prolific in institutions for higher education, and many of them were coeducational. (One of the most advanced, if judged by its published curriculum, was Lombard University, in Galesburg, Illinois, chartered as the Illinois Liberal Institute, in 1851. Its second catalogue, 1853-54, shows a Board of Trustees of fifteen, a college department including "gentlemen and ladies," 14 ladies, 35 gentlemen, though the *summary* states "males" and "females." It contains a four years' course and a three years' scientific course. The institution was founded by Universalists who objected to "such creed-drilling as prevailed in sectarian

institutions.” It claimed “a respectable library” and “a full and thorough collegiate course.” But it began Latin and Greek in college, allowed ladies to omit the calculus, engineering, analytic geometry, and substitute German, and permitted the substitution of French for a portion of Latin and Greek.¹ Evidently here was a “ladies’ course,” but this was not the end of the matter. Meanwhile, they meet supposedly feminine needs in education, and offer embroidery, needlework, wax-work, music, painting. There are three in the college faculty, professors of mathematics, ancient languages, and philosophy. The expenses of the college course are \$8.25, and French and German \$3, a quarter.

In 1854–55 the curriculum has developed. There are now 26 females and 48 males in the college course, and the Catalogue claims² that it is more extensive than is usually pursued in our colleges. Italian is offered.

In 1855–56 the college announces itself as Lombard University, after one of its principal benefactors. It has added a professor of natu-

¹ Catalogue of 1853–54, p. xiii.

² Page xx.

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ral science, and announces two degrees conferred on females in 1856 (four on males). The published admission requirements include all of Virgil, Sallust or Cæsar, Cicero's Selected Orations, five books of the *Anabasis*, three of Homer, arithmetic, elementary algebra, English grammar, ancient and modern geography, ancient and modern history — almost the same as the Harvard requirements of 1870, fourteen years later.¹ The course outlined² would be a stiff one to-day, and its manifest impossibility for the conditions of that day, even though the claim is made that the inhabitants are chiefly from New England and New York,³ is seen in the decline in later catalogues. At the same time the institution is offering "wax flowers and fruit" at an extra cost of \$8, and "Grecian painting" at \$5, oil painting at \$15, music at \$10, leather work at \$5. The President had raised a fund of \$75,000.

In 1857–58 appears a new President, Otis A. Skinner. Only 18 students are in college, 4 of whom, all freshmen, are girls. In the scientific

¹ See Broome, p. 48. ² Catalogue, 1854–55, pp. 20–24.

³ Catalogue of 1857–58.

department are 52 students, and in the preparatory, 274. There is a great decline in the standards for admission, the Eclogues and *two* books of the *Æneid*, for example, two books of Cæsar, the Greek reader! Compared with the statement just made, from 1855–56, what has happened? Was the absurdity of the former at once seen? Or has the institution passed through a crisis? A new charter is now adopted, and a new “plank walk extends to the post-office and the different churches.” Now, for the first time, there is distinct reference to coeducation as an issue, and it is claimed that its success justifies it.¹ There is no rule bearing especially on the presence of girls.

The Catalogue of 1859 shows six professors. Six books of Virgil are now required and the Anabasis (though no amount is specified).

In the Catalogue of 1860 the names of the women, six of whom are in college, are placed under the lists of men in the appropriate classes. The requirements are changed, and somewhat advanced, especially in Greek.

In 1861 we have a new body of rules, the

¹ Catalogue of 1857–58, p. 24.

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first reference to any real problem in coeducation. "Those of different sexes may not visit each other at their rooms at any time," nor "attend the meetings of a society composed of students of the opposite sex," nor "take walks and rides together without permission," nor "enter the marriage relation while connected with the institution."

In 1862 there are three women in college, but four are in the scientific course. Now appears a "ladies' course," with four names. It extends through three years, gives Cicero and Virgil to its freshmen, Cicero and Horace to the sophomores, and French to the seniors.

In 1863, of eight in the college course three are women, but there are seven women in the ladies' course and ten out of the twenty-six students in the scientific. Not till 1864 is a degree invented for the ladies' course, Laureate of Arts (L.A.). In this year, the one preceding the opening of Vassar, there is printed a list of the graduates from 1856 on. There are eleven alumnae, including the class of 1863, but of these five have B.S. and two L.A., showing a very small demand for real college edu-

cation among the girls of that section. In 1864 there were granted two A.B.'s and one L.A.; in 1865, one B.S.; in 1866, one A.B.; and in 1867, the year of Vassar's first graduating class, one L.A.

It may be mentioned, as indicative of the problems with which the small colleges had to deal at that time, that of the class of 1862, seven out of the nine men are in the army.

We need not follow this history further, but there is no increase of interest as late as 1869, when the Catalogue shows five girls in the classical course, and when the new "literary course," *in which no men are found*, absorbs most of the girls. Here was a full opportunity of college education open to them, but as yet there was no general interest awakened toward it. A strong curriculum was published, worthy of our best colleges, but the number trained under it was very small.¹

¹ It has been claimed that Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, introduced education for girls as early as Lombard. *The Story of Knox College* (1912) shows that an education was offered to girls in a special department, and under special teachers, in 1849-50 (p. 66). In 1850 a three years' course was organized as a "Female Collegiate Department." In 1851 three young women were graduated from this department.

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The Milwaukee College was chartered in 1853. There are no records of the Trustees, and no catalogues existing from 1859 to 1867.¹ The few suggestions of a curriculum and the list of the faculty indicate a female seminary of the usual type. Two were graduated in 1853, but there is no word of a degree, though the diploma (a copy of which is given²) was declared by the President "fully equivalent to the baccalaureate or first degree in arts as conferred by other literary institutions." The college was poor in resources and was apparently no more than a school.³ Even in 1874 and

The course was "somewhat diluted," is the statement of a member of the Knox Faculty (p. 72). In 1858 this Female Department had 60 students (in the college proper there were 109 men). *In 1874* (p. 82), "the college took a new departure, perhaps as a measure of policy, perhaps to satisfy a demand." The "*course was thrown open to women*" with the privilege of the A.B. degree. Even yet, though, they met in the seminary, apart, excepting in the more advanced studies and in the lectures of the senior year. They were allowed six years, instead of four, to complete the course, in order "to avoid injury to health, and to give time to the cultivation of fine arts and other accomplishments which are not pursued by young men." Not till 1891 was a distinctive course for women abandoned, and not till 1901 was the substitute for it, a B.L. course, in its turn given up.

¹ *Annals of Milwaukee College, 1848-91*, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

1875, when Professor Farrar, of Vassar, had become President, the curriculum was not of college grade.

Butler College, Indianapolis, was founded in 1855 and opened to women. It had a "female collegiate course" which continued till 1864.¹ A transcript of this is furnished in a letter by President Howe (October 8, 1910), showing that it was but a three years' course, that it offered preparatory Latin and mathematics in its first year, two years of "German or French," and a sprinkling of science, philosophy, history, economics, etc. Mrs. Sewall says that girls could substitute music for mathematics and French for Greek, but this may refer to an earlier date than the President's letter. He says that the Catalogue of 1870-71 states that the "Board have determined to make no distinction between male and female students, with respect to branches of study, but invite them to pursue these branches upon an 'equal' footing, and side by side make proof of the 'rights' to the highest academic honors." This, however, was much later than the date

¹ Mrs. Sewall, in *Woman's Work*, p. 73.

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limiting the present investigation, and at that time, 1870-71, Butler's freshman class was doing mostly preparatory work. This must be remembered as we record four women graduates of Butler up to and including 1865. Miss Butler had entered the "male course" in 1858 and graduated in 1862, but the curriculum of 1870 suggests that that of 1860 was not up to the grade of our better colleges.¹

¹ The Oxford College for Women, Oxford, Ohio, claims a foundation in 1830, but as an academy (Oxford Female Institute). A plant valued at \$100,000 was dedicated in 1855-56, but neither the faculty nor curriculum justifies the claim that it was properly a college then. Its Superior Department, for which the junior, middle, and senior years seem preparatory, includes Virgil, Greek grammar and reader, the more advanced mathematics characteristic of these schools, and there is the usual philosophy of the time. There is a rearrangement of classes, but no substantial advance of curriculum the next year. "A knowledge of the elements of two languages, at least, beside the English" is required for the "diploma." No degrees were given, apparently, before 1886. (Letters and other material from President Jane Sherzer, Ph.D.) Knight and Commons's *History of Education in Ohio* does not mention Oxford.

Since the above was in print the catalogues of the Pennsylvania Female College of Perkiomen Bridge (now Collegeville) have been seen, through the courtesy of the librarian of Ursinus College. It was chartered in 1853 on the basis of a privately owned seminary, "with full university privileges." Its president was a graduate of Wesleyan. The other two members of the small staff who had degrees received them from

Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin, opened for men and women in 1849, but as preparatory, organized its freshman class in 1853, and graduated four men and three women in 1857. Two of the latter received the A.B. degree. The same course was planned for men and women, and as everywhere else the scientific course was of lower grade than the classical. President Plantz, to whom we are indebted for this information,¹ has furnished a transcript of the course of study published at that time. He gives the testimony of one of these first graduates that most of the girls took the classical course with the men, and that the special course for women, which received the same degree as the scientific course, was not popular. Yet that course was

this college in 1853, and occupied chairs in 1854. Latin was begun in the college; the course was three years, and graduation was permitted at seventeen. A fourth year (sophomore) was inserted in 1856-57. There are no academic entrance requirements published, but for graduation a pupil must have "completed the course," "or an equivalent," with the exception of the "Greek and the languages and mathematics of the senior class"! The printed course is fair, but makes absurd the claim of the Catalogue of 1854 that it is as "full and thorough as in any of our American colleges for the other sex."

¹ Letter of November 9, 1910.

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creditable, though much of it we should classify as preparatory; and besides the usual science and philosophy, gave opportunity, if desired, to begin Greek and to carry on Latin to Horace and the *De Officiis*, and to begin German. French was required.

The classical course was a good one, with the requirements of the better colleges in mathematics, Latin, Greek; and the curriculum had the rare feature of certain electives after the second term of the junior year.

Hillsdale College, incorporated as the Michigan Central College in 1850, and moved to Hillsdale in 1853, was apparently rechartered in 1855.¹ A degree of B.S. seems to have been bestowed on a woman in 1851, and an A.B. in 1852. It struggled with great financial difficulties and with many other obstacles, but the spirit of its founders was like that at Oberlin. Its first full-term class graduated in 1860, on the basis of a good course of study. What these earlier degrees may connote it is not easy to discover, but they were manifestly not

¹ *History of Higher Education in Michigan*, Bureau of Education, Circulars of Information, no. 4, 1891, p. 124.

granted for a full four years' course. Happily for the later period we have the record of the visit of Sophia Jex Blake in 1865.¹ Life was simple and conditions exceedingly crude, but to Miss Blake the manners seemed rather better than at Oberlin, and the classroom work at least as good. The same general rules of life prevailed. The professor of mathematics gave enthusiastic testimony as to the excellence of the work of the girls, and claimed for the college standards of about equal grade with the stronger Eastern institutions. Against his view is the general crudeness of conditions and lack of modern facilities, but in favor of it is the intense earnestness of spirit which characterized the teachers and the students, and the generally good standards witnessed to by that spirit and a good curriculum. It is a strong course which is set before us in 1865,² worthy of any college then. The preparatory course is but two years, but the student carried only three subjects, it may be remembered, and study was the rule of life. The English and scientific courses have the usual weakness of

¹ *Visit, etc.*, pp. 65 seq.

² Blake, pp. 94 seq.

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that period, and the ladies' course, four years, was quite equal to them.

Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa, founded as an academy, was chartered a college in 1857. The catalogues show a good course of study, open alike to "ladies" and "gentlemen," the minimum age for entrance being fourteen. The conditions of admission included Cæsar, Ovid, a book of the *Anabasis*, and in the freshman year they studied Virgil, Sallust, the *Cyropaedia*, geometry. This, however, is not the whole story. The B.S. degree was given for the same course, *without the languages*, and in three years; and the degree of M.E.L. was also given to girls, which probably betokens still lesser requirements. But an earnest effort was made to maintain a college, though it was vastly overweighted by the academy. In 1858, for example, when one woman graduated (M.E.L.) there were 27 students in college, 7 of whom were girls; but there were 218 preparatories and 55 primaries. The next year (1858-59) 3 girls graduated (M.E.L.), 27 were in college, and 294 in the academy. In 1859-60, 2 girls received B.S.;

and in 1860–61, 2 girls took the A.B. degree, who were ranked as sophomores in the preceding catalogue. The entire graduating class was 4, — the preparatories, 290, and primaries, 87. One girl graduated in 1862 (B.S.), none in 1863. The freshman class dwindled from 40 to 19 in the second year. Was this the influence of the war, — or the lack of demand for a college education? In 1864–65, 4 girls graduated (2 A.B.; 1 M.E.L., 1 B.S.), and the preparatories are divided into classical, 66, and scientific, 245. Board, at from \$2.50 to \$3.50 per week, is regarded as very high, and the hope of lower rates is expressed. The library now numbers about 600 volumes. In 1866, 3 girls graduated, 2 A.B., 1 B.S. There are 459 in the classes of the Academy. In 1867, 7 girls graduated (3 A.B., 4 B.S.). The libraries of the college and societies now number 2500 volumes. There are 77 in the classical preparatory class, and 266 in the "*scientific.*" *This, in those days,* was always a name for a lower grade of requirement. In ten years, then, 25 girls had graduated, 9 with A.B., the others with the weaker degrees of B.S. and

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M.E.L. There was evidently no loud cry for the higher education of women.¹

Earlham College had been a Friends' Boarding-School since 1847, and was opened as a college in 1859,² and the policy of coeducation was maintained from the beginning. The first graduating class of the college consisted of one man and one woman, in 1862, and no woman is mentioned again till 1865, when five of the ten graduates were women, three of them with A.B. In 1866, there were no women, and in 1867 one, with B.S.³

The Catalogue of 1864–65 gives a picture of one large building, apparently the old seminary. The charges were \$190 for everything for forty weeks. If the student was not a Friend, the tuition was fifteen dollars more, special funds having been given for the Friends. There were four professors for mathematics, classics and their literature, natural science, government and English literature. The scientific course is marked by the usual weakness

¹ Catalogues from 1857–58 to 1866–67, compared with the Quinquennial of 1908.

² Letter from Professor Lindley, November 1, 1910.

³ Alumni Triennial Catalogue, June, 1910.

as compared with the classical. In the latter the freshmen read Virgil and Cicero, and Greek is begun in the junior year, and certain studies are made elective for female students.¹ The course is said to be "adapted to the wants of the West." The library has 2000 volumes, including those of the literary societies. No "gaudy clothing" or any jewelry, excepting watches, will be allowed, and as "the quantity of rich food sent to some students by their parents and friends" has "produced much inconvenience, particularly in a sanitary view, the practice will be objected to with the exception of ripe fruit, and the packages returned."

There are several institutions which require mention, for which the claim is sometimes made that they also offered education to women in this earlier period, but made mistakenly.

The University of Utah, or Deseret, for example, was incorporated in 1850 by the provisional government of the Territory, whose action was ratified by the Legislature in 1851, and its opportunities were designed for

¹ Catalogue of 1864-65.

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both sexes. "Owing to the immature condition of its finances as well as to the limited patronage it received, instruction was discontinued in 1851 (it was opened in November!) and not resumed till November, 1867."¹

Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, was opened in 1858, but did not graduate a class till 1866. Women were admitted on the same terms as men, and of the three graduates of this first class, one was a woman.² The course of study taken by this class includes Livy, Horace, and Cicero, the Iliad, Memorabilia, and Odyssey, geometry and higher algebra, in the freshman curriculum. The course is a good one throughout, and for that period of American education, makes particularly good provision for history.³

Swarthmore College is noted on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Programme of Bryn Mawr College among the colleges open to women before Vassar, and the date is given as 1864. This college, however, though *incorporated* in

¹ Catalogue of 1910-11, *Historical Sketch*.

² Letter from the President, November 10, 1910.

³ Copy furnished by President.

1864 (Vassar was *chartered* in 1861), was not opened till 1869, and its first class was graduated in 1873. Women were admitted from the first.¹

It is assumed very often that several of the Western State Universities were pioneers in this movement for college education for women, but the facts do not warrant such a conclusion. Naturally that would have been the proper result of the Ordinances of 1785 and 1787, setting aside land for schools in every township and for a State University in the Territories or States carved out of the Northwest Territory. The social and economic conditions, also, which had forced coeducation in the early colleges in Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan, already passed under review, would seem to have especially demanded this in State Colleges. But whatever the theory, the facts were otherwise. Michigan, for example, whose lead in this respect has been so signal, only opened its doors to women fully in 1870. At Wisconsin, writes the statistician of the university, "women had very little consider-

¹ Letter of Vice-President Hoadley, November 1, 1910.

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ation prior to its reorganization in 1866."¹ A Normal Department was maintained *for women only* from 1863, but before that had both men and women. Not till 1869 did a woman receive the *Ph.B.* degree, and not till 1870 the degree of *A.B.*² At the time of the reorganization, in 1866, the university was "recognized" as open to all, but *by legislation* this was limited the next year, and women were confined to the Normal Department, which was of much inferior grade.³

Iowa State University seems to have admitted women to full privileges in 1860,⁴ but there is small trace of *college* training for them at that time. From 1858 to 1865, forty-two women received certificates in the Normal

¹ Letter, December 13, 1910.

² Letter, *supra*.

³ Cf. Sewall, in *Woman's Work*, p. 75. She declares women were not on the same footing with men till 1875. See President Bascom's testimony, that then — 1875 — he first got the commencements together. Mrs. Olin says, however, that the same rights in classes were enjoyed by women, and she entered in 1872, and was "unconscious of any difference whatever." That a woman received the degree in 1870 was proof that she had had full privileges for four years. (Mrs. Olin's letter of November 23, 1912.) The Regents seem to have continued to discuss the question, as if unsettled. (Olin, *Women of a State University*, p. 54.)

⁴ See table in Mrs. Sewall's essay, *Woman's Work*, p. 57.

Department. One woman graduated in 1863 in the college course and 3 in 1864. The conditions of admission in 1860 were arithmetic, algebra through equations of the first degree, plane geometry, trigonometry, English grammar, geography, four books of Cæsar, four orations of Cicero, six books of Virgil, Greek reader and two books of the *Anabasis*, a most creditable requirement at any date.¹ The preparatory department accomplished this in two years.² In 1864-65, when there were 164 "gentlemen" and 275 "ladies," Ph.D. was given after one year of study to those who had won the B.P. degree in college, evidently an equivalent for the A.M. which was given in a year to an A.B. We find now that French and German may be substituted for Greek. In 1866, after the war, we find 362 gentlemen, 306 ladies, 1 A.B. (man), and 8 normals (women). In 1866-67 there were 12 ladies in college classes, 10 of them freshmen (of a class of 48). One lady took the A.B. degree.

¹ Letter of Executive Clerk, October 13, 1910.

² See Catalogue of 1863-64.

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A peculiarity of the university was the giving of Latin through two years and Greek through the other two, and this is claimed as an invention of the university. But modern languages may be substituted for Greek.

In 1867-68 there are 20 women in college, 15 of them freshmen, and the graduates are 1 man with A.B., 1 woman with B.S. Yet it is said in the catalogue that "its progress has exceeded the anticipation of its most anxious friends." Evidently, though Iowa offered its advantages to women in 1860, the college education of girls in that State had in no degree become a "movement" when Vassar graduated its first class.

It remains to recount the history of the one college opened at this time, distinctly for the education of girls, in an Eastern State. Elmira College was chartered in 1855 (April 13), on condition, "first, that no degree shall be conferred without a course of study equivalent to a full ordinary course of college study as pursued in the colleges of this state shall have been completed; second, that said college shall be subject to the visitation of the Regents of

the University of the State of New York in the same manner and to the same extent as the other colleges of the State." Dr. Cowles was called to the presidency in 1855, and he states that a committee of five, representing as many college faculties, was appointed to prepare such a course of study as would be most suitable for young women, the work in every respect to be equivalent to that done in colleges for men.

This curriculum provided for the freshman year, Cicero's *Orations*, Greek Testament, algebra, astronomy and botany, history and the English poets; for the sophomore year, Tacitus, Greek Testament and Homer, geometry, French, political economy and civil government, rhetoric, and philosophy. The junior year gave logic, German, or French, Kame's "Criticism," English, philosophy, geology, mineralogy, chemistry, and trigonometry. The senior year offered Paley and Butler, mental science and moral philosophy, conic sections and mathematical astronomy, French or German, English literature. The studies of the programme were "recited" from

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four to five times a week, "making a weekly schedule of not less than twenty-six to twenty-eight recitations," — "strenuous," as is claimed, but suggestive of a lingering of the school idea of that day about the college. But the curriculum is certainly a thoroughly respectable one, and it must be compared with the standards of *that* day. The college deserved the entire respect of those who were comparing the new effort with the standards of men's colleges in general. It can hardly be claimed, however, that this curriculum is the equivalent of some of those we have reviewed, and which had already been taken by women. Indeed, the claim that "to Elmira and to no other belongs the distinction, the honor, and the glory of *introducing* into the world's civilization college education for women," cannot be for a moment entertained, in light of the history which we have been following. Perhaps it is never true that a great movement is found to have such a single and definite source. But Elmira was a step forward, and deserved more honor and attention and support than were awarded it. It met ridicule, which is sur-

rising enough when one recalls the history of the South and West, and skepticism and opposition, and suffered from a lack of the financial support which it deserved. But what a strange revelation of ignorance of what had been already accomplished in other parts of the land, when a college president called it "faddish" to say that a woman could comprehend college mathematics, or master the Greek verb; and another declared the effort to give women "a man's education" "too ridiculous," and a professor of philosophy said that the effort to teach women his branch of study was "beyond his comprehension"!

In 1865, when Vassar opened, Elmira's faculty consisted of a president, one other man professor, a lady principal, called "preceptress" in "history, physiology, and English literature," and a "preceptress" in "modern languages, Latin, and algebra." There is an assistant preceptress in history, arithmetic, Latin, and drawing, three teachers of music — a college faculty of six or seven. There are 74 in college classes and 108 in the preparatory school. Fourteen graduated in 1864, and the

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total number of graduates is 94. The freshmen are called "protomathians," a singular effort to escape a "masculine" word, a likeness to which effort has prevailed at Smith for many years. Probably "preceptress" was invented to escape the use of "professor" for women.

This report of 1865 (the Regents') shows Greek optional, and, by special vote of the faculty, the possible substitution of music and painting for German. The claim is made that there is "nearly the ordinary amount of Latin and mathematics"; that "it has been somewhat difficult to arrange with entire satisfaction a college course of study for young ladies." It furnishes "an appropriate share of those elegant accomplishments which are so highly esteemed in social life." Altogether this report of 1865 seems to denote a struggle with great difficulties and a question as to the possibility, in the state of public opinion, of maintaining the high standard of ten years before. The endowment was only \$5500; the real estate, \$90,000; the income from students, \$26,505; and the funded debt was \$14,000. The salary list was only \$4865. The charge for board and

tuition was but \$200 (laundry extra). It was a hard struggle to maintain standards in such conditions, but the effort was worthy, and Elmira should have had the generous and hearty support then which would have given it the place it deserved through its pioneer effort.¹

¹ This material is gathered from a letter from President Mackenzie; copies of the Curriculum of 1855; the Regents' Report of 1865, which also gives the course of study for that year; and material from a college publication, furnished by the President.

III

THE INCEPTION OF MATTHEW VASSAR'S PLAN

IN view of the various efforts already made, both in the North and in the South, to give a college education to girls, it might be supposed that there would be no claim to novelty or originality on the part of the plan announced by Mr. Vassar. That claim, however, was distinctly made in the literature of the time, and made also by men prominent in educational work, in some cases even by those engaged in the more advanced types of the schools and so-called colleges for young women. There can be no question as to the *fact*: the new college was heralded as a beginning of a new work, and its founder as the discoverer of a fresh principle. How could it be? How,— save that the work already done had not been such as to attract the attention of the world, and had not gained such proportions or been set in such an environment as to impress any but the small circle devoted to it? The inter-

change of ideas was not rapid, as judged by our present modes. Oberlin was remote, Georgia and Mary Sharp were local in name and influence, Elmira had just begun its work, and was generally thought of, no doubt, as another large school for girls. Moreover, a great movement often depends on a great opportunity, and the years of our bitter Civil War were really the open sesame for the budding and blossoming and fruiting of the subconscious demands for larger activities, larger public responsibilities, and a more generous education for womankind. It was one of the happy synchronisms of history which opened the doors of Vassar in the very year which closed those of the temple of Janus and gave to us a reunited country with new outlook, new necessities, and new opportunities. Nothing shows more clearly that there had been no extensive demand for college education for women than the figures given in the preceding chapters. For a quarter of a century opportunities had been offered and they were recognized by very few. The time for the movement in behalf of women had not come, but when it came the recog-

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nition was swift and the rapidity of the response was momentous. Vassar really marked an epoch. Therefore to most the foundation seemed new, and the founder one of the great Originals.

How did it come to pass that the name of this childless old man, a Poughkeepsie brewer, self-educated and self-made, became identified with one of the most remarkable causes of the nineteenth century? The answer is full of interest, and much of the inner history of the influences that worked for the idea, amid great oppositions and many threatening pitfalls, has never been printed before. It would be a great mistake to credit Mr. Vassar with original impulse in the undertaking, or with native grasp of the great ideas which he later formulated in words so expressive and so striking.

This is not the place for the story of his life. Suffice it to say that, born in England in 1792, he came to this country with his parents in 1796, settled near Poughkeepsie, was trained in the business of brewing ale, and worked up from poverty to the possession of what was then esteemed a great fortune, — over \$800,-000. He was not only simple and thrifty in his

habits; he was solid in his interests and acquirements, read good books with thoughtfulness, and expressed his views of them in simple and effective style. He had no children, and as his fortune grew the question of its ulterior use employed his mind, and became a factor in his conversation with his friends. He had been much impressed, during a trip to Europe in 1845, by the Thomas Guy Hospital of London, the founder of which was a distant kinsman of his family, and he had resolved to devote a large part of his fortune, during his lifetime, to some benevolent purpose. As late as 1855 that purpose was the foundation of a hospital; but his plan to build in his lifetime must have wavered if we accept the statement of Dr. Jewett's narrative (in manuscript) that Mr. Vassar told him, in 1855, that his will provided that the bulk of his estate should go to his two nephews, they having agreed that on the death of the last survivor "the aggregate of the three estates should go to the erection of the proposed hospital."¹ "He added: 'In making this

¹ Dr. Jewett's manuscript narrative, "Origin of Vassar College," p. 6.

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disposition of my property, I desire to build a monument to myself, to perpetuate my own name, to do something for Poughkeepsie where I have made all my money, and to do good for my fellowmen.' 'And now,' he asked, 'what do you think of my plan?'" This question introduces us to the man whose clear thought was undoubtedly the cause of the change in Mr. Vassar's plans, and whose influence was the dominant factor in the whole scheme till the unhappy circumstances arose which separated him from it just before the college was to open its doors.

The origin of the idea in Mr. Vassar's mind has been ascribed frequently to his niece, Lydia Booth, who was at the head of the Cottage Hill Seminary for girls in Poughkeepsie, the building for which was owned by Mr. Vassar. Lossing tells us¹ that Miss Booth made frequent suggestions to Mr. Vassar of the founding of an institution "of a higher order than any then existing" for her sex, and that "the suggestion made a deep impression on his mind." The earliest statement, however, on

¹ *Vassar College and its Founder*, pp. 59, 81.

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the matter, that is known to us is contained in Mr. Vassar's address to the trustees, on February 23, 1864. He says:¹—

And yet it is due to truth to say that my great interest on the subject of female education was awakened not less than twenty years ago by an intimate female friend and relative, now deceased, who conducted a seminary of long standing and character in this city. That close intimacy and interest continued many years, until just before the institution passed into the hands of our President. It was this fact, more than any other, and more than all others, that awakened me early to the possibility and necessity of an institution like the one we now propose.

Again, in an autobiographic manuscript, preserved in the Matthew Vassar Museum, written in December, 1866, he says: —

About 1845 I visited Europe and while in London visited the famous "Guy" Hospital, the founder of which a family relative, "John (Thomas?) Guy," my nephew John Guy Vassar had the honor of being named after. Seeing this institution first suggested the idea of devoting a portion of my estate to some charitable purpose, and about this period took quite an interest in a niece of mine,

¹ *Communications of the Founder*, February 23, 1864.

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Lydia Booth, who was then engaged in a small way in the tuition of children resulting in after years in the opening of a female seminary in Poughkeepsie being the first of kind excepting one other, Mrs. Conger, in the village. The force of circumstances brought me occasionally in business intercourse with my Niece, which will account for the early direction of my mind for the enlarged education of women and the subsequent drift of inquiries in my conversation and correspondence with gentlemen educators in this country and a few in Europe, which by reference to letters on file will more fully appear.

It must be noted, however, that this was written after the college was in large part built and organized, and when the influence of the mind which had been chiefly potent in prompting it had waned. In his great first address, in 1861, he makes no reference to the source of his idea. Mr. Swan, Mr. Vassar's closest friend, thought Miss Booth's influence was "infinitesimal." It is surely most unlikely that this excellent woman, who controlled an ordinary young woman's seminary, had any large vision of a *college*. In any case, Miss Booth had died, and Mr. Vassar's will had been made without any reference to the

educational project. Then, in 1855, Dr. Jewett appears upon the scene.¹

Milo P. Jewett was born in Vermont in 1808, was graduated at Dartmouth in 1828, and at the Andover Theological Seminary in 1830. He felt that his call was to *teach*, and accepted a chair in Marietta College and also gave his energies toward the establishment of a public school system for Ohio. Having changed his views on baptism, he resigned his chair in 1838, went South, and established the Judson Female Institute at Marion, Alabama, in January, 1839.² It was one of the strong and best-known schools of the South, with a patronage running up to two hundred and fifty pupils. Owing to the growth and intensity of the anti-slavery discussions, Mr. Jewett left the South

¹ The founder writes Mrs. S. J. Hale ("editress" of *Godey's Lady's Book*), January 25, 1864: "At the incipient stage of the contemplated scheme, before lisping the idea to any mortal, I first conferred with my friend Professor Jewett, from whom I not only received a full endorsement of my view, but he largely contributed to aid me in its further development." It was natural enough that the founder should have so blended his various thoughts of a time then many years behind him as to fail to distinguish the strands of influence that had guided him.

² *Educational Review*, October, 1912, p. 222.

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in 1855, and purchased the school in Poughkeepsie which had been conducted by Lydia Booth. Thus he was thrown into relations of increasing intimacy with Matthew Vassar.

The unhappy circumstances of 1864, which dissolved at once this friendship and Dr. Jewett's relations to Vassar College, must concern us later, but they were the occasion, after his retirement, of the preparation of a manuscript by Dr. Jewett which reviewed the inception of the enterprise and its progress till the close of his connection with it. This paper, entitled "Origin of Vassar College," was written by Dr. Jewett in Milwaukee, where he spent his later years, and where he was an officer of the Board of the Milwaukee Female College, and for a time also Chairman of the Board of Visitors of the State University. The manuscript of 149 pages of legal cap is signed in March, 1879, in a trembling hand, by Milo P. Jewett. This was fifteen years after he left Vassar, and possibly there may be occasional failures in his recollections; but his statements are buttressed by papers of his own, dating from these active years and incorporated in



MILO P. JEWETT
President of Vassar College 1861-1864

his story. The college archives also contain letters corroborative of the general narrative.

Mr. Jewett and Mr. Vassar were associated in the same church, though Mr. Vassar had not himself joined the church, but was "fond of talking on religious subjects," and they became gradually "free and confidential." Mr. Jewett came thus to speak plainly of the duty "of the rich man to use his property for the glory of God." At length Mr. Vassar told him his plan, as already stated, and to his question Mr. Jewett answered frankly that it did not strike him favorably. "Great hospitals are for great cities." To spend a great sum in a city "not a seaport," and not likely ever to exceed "forty or fifty thousand inhabitants," seemed to him "an unwise use of money." "Indeed, I think you might as well throw it into the Hudson River!"

"Mr. Vassar expressed great surprise at this unexpected disapproval of his plans," but Mr. Jewett then, and subsequently, by word and by writing, followed up his attack on the cherished scheme until Mr. Vassar became "dissatisfied with the provisions of his will."

“One day, in a characteristic outburst of impatience he petulantly exclaimed, ‘I wish somebody would tell me what to do with my money! It’s the plague of my life — keeps me awake o’ nights — stocks going down, banks breaking, insurance companies failing!’” Mr. Jewett seized his opportunity, told him of a scheme which had been growing in his mind for several years, which he could never execute, but which Mr. Vassar’s money would make possible. “It’s to build and endow a college for young women which shall be to them what Yale and Harvard are to young men.” “There is not an endowed college for young women in the world,” he told him, though “*plenty* of female colleges so-called,” with “no libraries, cabinets, museums, apparatus worth mentioning.” If he would build such a college it would be a “monument more lasting than the pyramids.” “The idea caught the imagination of Mr. Vassar, and then and there Vassar College was born.” “This was in the winter of 1855-56.”

It is a rather remarkable statement of Mr. Jewett’s that, so far as he knows, even the

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most advanced thinkers on the higher education of "the weaker sex" had not entertained this conception of a substantially equivalent education. He refers to Miss Beecher and Mary Lyon, but finds no trace of the idea of a "full course of liberal studies in an institution fully equipped and amply endowed." It is to be remembered that this man was a New Englander, too, a graduate of one of its leading colleges, — a frequent speaker on educational issues, a professor in an Ohio college, associated with the Ohio school system, and with a long and successful experience in the education of girls. And he calls this "the first female college in the world." Evidently priority of date is not so much in his mind as the fullness of equipment.

Mr. Jewett saw that he had deeply impressed his friend and followed up his advantage. He gives us one of the papers submitted to Mr. Vassar at that time, entitled "Facts and reflections respecting the founding of a College for Young Ladies, addressed to Matthew Vassar, Esq."¹

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 10.

He begins with quotations regarding the education of females, from the Rev. Dr. Spring, the highly distinguished clergyman of New York, — a fine passage satisfactory to every believer of to-day, — and from Lord Brougham. He dwells then on the influence of mothers and the dependence on their wise education of the future of the country; he points out the influence of teachers, 60,000 female teachers being then at work in the land. Nothing can meet the demand but the establishment of institutions of collegiate rank for women. He tells of the inestimable value of the colleges for men and the truth that like conclusions must be accepted for the other sex. With tact he indicates the high honor accorded to the founders of these institutions, and adds, but “not one single college for young women has yet been established in this country.” He means, he says, “that not one has been founded and endowed which will compare with any of the respectable colleges for our own sex.” They have no high standards and no *permanency*. They are individual or sectarian. He then proceeds to sketch the

needs of such an institution, — “buildings, libraries, cabinets, apparatus, etc., a full faculty of instructors, men of learning and reputation; endowments to secure permanency, and to support worthy indigent students of promising talents.” He pays a tribute to Mary Lyon’s work, but says all that has been done can never compare with “Yale, Brown, or Union” unless there be abundant endowments. The demand, however, is sure, as is shown in the endowment of some schools, and in the efforts of “the American Woman’s Education Association,” which was chartered in New York in 1852, and has already started, on a small scale, colleges in Milwaukee and Dubuque. He mentions impressive names of men and women enlisted in the work.

Then he appeals directly to Mr. Vassar regarding the employment of “the thousands over which God has made you steward” for this very end. How can he appropriate his property “more wisely, more usefully, more nobly?” He appeals to his interest in the Sunday-School, Bible Societies, Missions, the development of the West, his pride in Pough-

keepsie, the love of his town, his country, and his God, and indicates that the work for a college for women will promote all these and establish his own fame. "From its towers lifted to the sky it will reflect the luster of your munificence so long as the sun shall shine in the heavens." And the *present* is the time for action, — "at least so far as to make final testamentary arrangements on the subject." His might be the privilege of leadership and example, like "Elisha [!] Yale, John Harvard, and Mr. Brown." What Fulton and Morse had done for physical and material interests (Morse was a townsman of Vassar, and later one of the charter trustees of the College), he might do for this higher cause. Others had *written* of steam and electricity, but these had done the deed and won the fame. "To you Providence offers the high privilege, the peculiar honor, of actually establishing and putting into operation the first grand permanent endowed Female College ever opened in the United States"; and he adds a fervent appeal to the consecration of his wealth to this high end. Even if his nephews should not join him, —

and Dr. Jewett had reason to doubt their interest,—Mr. Vassar was assured that he himself could carry through the scheme.

At once Mr. Vassar brought up objections that occurred to his cautious mind. It is interesting to note the absence from them of the considerations popularly urged, even yet, against college education for girls. These objections are inferred from another of Dr. Jewett's letters given us in full, answering in detail a letter of Mr. Vassar's, and showing the tactfulness of Dr. Jewett's approach as well as the force of his conviction.

Objections are natural, says Jewett. Howard, Columbus, Mary Lyon, met them. The wise man will look for basal principles and then move serenely on. There are two questions he asks "in the presence of the Searcher of Hearts" when he "is really desirous to decide on the *particular* path in which Providence would have *him* walk." "Is the plan or enterprise judicious?" "Is it practicable?"

Regarding the former query, he refers back to the earlier document, which was only a sketch, "knowing that for you nothing more

was necessary.” He then takes up, *seriatim*, “the objections in your note.”

1. The envy that might be excited among smaller institutions. This is not sustained by the experience of men’s colleges. The standards would be everywhere raised. The sectarian element can be carefully excluded.

2. Private and select schools would interfere with the scheme. These will always exist, but enough patrons remain who appreciate “superior education” “to fill up a dozen such institutions as you contemplate,” and the better the seminaries the fuller they are. Over two thousand are in the Willard, Spingler, Rutgers, Pittsfield, the Packer; and the New England schools have an equal number. These would be “nurseries for the college.” The fear that large schools for girls encourage bad habits, tastes, and depraved principles is entirely unsustained. The facts are against the smaller.

3. Is there not a prejudice against the institutions as aristocratic? “Not a growing” one. It is less so than twenty-five years earlier. Never did the colleges so fully command the confidence of the people.

4. Will not the wealthy object to the education of their daughters with the poor? Not often, though that may be true of a "solitary snob." Mind is the standard in colleges, and talent secures rank. Wealth appreciates this, and Holyoke demonstrates it.

5. Why raise the poor above their sphere, and awaken aspirations that can never be satisfied? That opens the whole question of educating women, and the century has settled that she shall be educated. Let her have the highest education her faculties can receive; only let it be as Dr. Sears writes, "of the feminine gender."

6. "Have not gigantic enterprises failed either through the incapacity or dishonesty of disbursing agents, or from other causes?" Not educational enterprises! Yale, Harvard, Andover have not lost a dollar. Even Girard succeeds, though under a city corporation, "without soul or conscience."

So after meeting objections, Dr. Jewett now adduces a new argument. All the seminaries are trying to persuade the public that they are "colleges for young ladies." That proves the

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demand! The college would be popular. The enterprise is "judicious."

"Is it practicable?" A second note from Mr. Vassar had raised this issue. "I perceive that you have decided that the plan is not 'practicable' on the large scale heretofore contemplated." "Very good; let us reduce the scale, the principle will remain unchanged." Mr. Vassar had asked for a scheme which would employ the bulk of the three estates, his nephews' and his own. The nephews were "not prepared to pledge their coöperation" — (a mild and patient statement in view of the facts!). A smaller scheme was called for, but one leaving "room for future growth and expansion." Dr. Jewett assures Mr. Vassar that he can found "an institution far beyond anything existing and which will in the future realize all the grand and splendid results to which I have heretofore adverted." He closes with the hope that Mr. Vassar will find the scheme both practical and practicable and that he will live to see the enterprise consummated.

In a note to this letter he tells us that he furnished "details of the reduced plans," but that

"subsequently the financial skies brightened," and "Mr. Vassar incorporated in his will another plan which I furnished him, appropriating \$400,000 to the college."

The scheme, however, had not yet passed beyond the dangers which threatened its realization. The nephews, Matthew, Jr., and John Guy, who favored the plan for the hospital, watched the new scheme with suspicion and without sympathy, but, according to Dr. Jewett's testimony, with apparent friendliness for him, and with confidence that their uncle would again change his mind. It is said that Mr. Vassar frequently made a new will, in the uncertainties he felt as to the wise disposition of his property. Meanwhile, to strengthen his purpose Jewett entered into correspondence with a number of educators, telling them that a gentleman of wealth had under consideration the endowment of a college for young women and asking their views as to the wisdom of the project. He tells us that, with a single exception, they gave it their warmest approval. These letters were placed in Mr. Vassar's hands, and greatly influenced his mind.¹

¹ Jewett's narrative, p. 36; cf. 46.

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Scarcely a trace of them has been found. After Mr. Vassar's death M. Vassar, Jr., sold to a ragman the founder's great accumulation of papers and letters, dating back to his early years. Mr. Oliver Booth expostulated with him, but he replied, "See how much I have added to the estate!"¹ It is probable that these valuable letters were thus destroyed. We know that among those consulted were Barnas Sears, President of Brown; Jacob Abbott; Presidents Anderson and Robinson. Dr. Charles West, of Brooklyn, formerly of Rutgers Institute, New York, who for many years was a leader in all the best work for woman's education, was one of these correspondents. Under date of February 6, 1888, he addressed the writer a letter, asking if among the college papers one was to be found by him in which he had answered "in extenso" a letter from Dr. Jewett written to him in November, 1855. Jewett had asked his views on the following points, — and the questions are probably those which he put in all his "one hundred

¹ Statement of O. Booth to Mr. Henry Booth, of Poughkeepsie, from whom the writer receives it.

letters." It is impossible to tell whether the language is Jewett's or West's, though quotation marks (*at the end only*) and the copy of the signature of Jewett would indicate that it is a copy of the original.

I. The Organization. *a.* If collegiate, how shall the instructors be supported? *b.* Endowments, how far desirable? *c.* What foundations for provisions (? — the word is uncertain), etc.?

II. The course of study. *a.* Ancient Languages. What and how far? *b.* Modern Languages, prerequisite to a diploma? *c.* Shall all students pursue a classical course? *d.* What shall be deemed an equivalent? *e.* Degrees, under what title?

III. Buildings, how many and what to accommodate 300 boarders, furnishing all needful literary, scientific, social and religious appliances? How can family influence be secured?

IV. Apparatus, amount and cost?

At present publicity is not desired, you will therefore please regard this communication as confidential."

M. P. JEWETT."

Mr. Vassar now asked Dr. Jewett to outline for him a plan of the institution he proposed. Many weeks were spent in elaborating a scheme which should include buildings, —

apparatus, library, museum, observatory, gymnasium, art gallery, a course of study, the faculty required, salaries, wages, etc. By the time this was done, Mr. Vassar had determined to devote the bulk of his property to a college, *after his death*, and in June, 1857, he destroyed his former will and with his own hand wrote a new one, in which he copied Jewett's plan¹ "word for word," devoted \$400,000 to the work, and provided that it should be established on the *outlined plan*. That plan, says Jewett, who kept no copy, was indicated in its "general features" in the famous and epochal address of Mr. Vassar to his new trustees in February, 1861. Later, Mr. Jewett induced Mr. Vassar, he says, to add a codicil to the will, giving the rest of his estate to the college.

"The next step was to persuade Mr. Vassar to build the college at once, that he might enjoy the supreme satisfaction of seeing it in successful operation." Ever since he had looked on the inscription on the Thomas Guy Hospital, Lossing tells us, he had thought of doing something worthy while he was alive,

¹ Jewett's manuscript narrative, p. 33.

but it was only by a gradual process that he could come to the point of parting with his hard-earned and slowly accumulated fortune. Jewett urged the value of his long business experience in connection with the building of the college, the joy to be reaped by doing the work himself, the escaping of a possible contest of his will, the crying present need of the benefits he contemplated giving, the happiness of seeing the students from the whole land hailing him as friend and father and benefactor. But the times seemed unfavorable. The difficulties that were so soon to ripen into war threatened his securities and might imperil the enterprise. He feared he might be like the man who began to build and was not able to finish, and those who were opposed to the scheme urged him against immediate action. Jewett wrote a friend at that time, "My mammoth Vassar College is likely to sleep on ten years because so much of Mr. Vassar's property is invested in railroad stocks, now twenty-five to fifty per cent below par."

But Mr. Vassar was determined now to carry out his plan and frequently refers in his

letters to his pleasure in being his own executor. He is warned by the extravagance of the Girard executors. He desired architectural designs. Jewett consulted Tefft, of Providence, a prominent school architect who made the interesting plans, still preserved, but rendered useless by his untimely death. James Renwick, Jr., of New York, was then employed. Jewett says the broad corridors adjacent to the outer walls were Mr. Vassar's "pet idea"¹ but that the general interior plans were his own, throughout, including the large number of flights of stairs and the unusual fire-protection. The architect forgot the closets which he had instructed him to furnish! He wished the plans redrawn later, but the long delay was urged as the reason for proceeding.²

Efforts were made from time to time to secure the coöperation of his nephews, but without result. Jewett accuses them of devising a plan, as late as the winter and spring of 1860, to divert their uncle's attention from his

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 42.

² Jewett denies all foundation for the legend as to Mr. Vassar's remark that the girls could "drive nails in the walls and hang their gowns on them."

purpose, so as to save the bulk of the fortune for their hospital scheme, to which eventually the great part of their property went. The story is interesting even if it leaves us in uncertainty as to the founder's relation to the scheme.

Jewett tells us¹ that one Sunday morning at "Sabbath School," M. Vassar, Jr., approached him "gleefully, rubbing his hands" and "beaming with smiles," assuring him that his uncle was about to build a school for boys, one for girls, and a free library, in the city; that the project was already before the legislature, and announced in the city paper. Jewett saw the significance of the scheme at once, and that afternoon addressed to Mr. Vassar a letter of which he gives a copy. It fills four pages of legal cap, in the manuscript, and it may well be called crucial in the history of Vassar College. He reminds him that his purpose for three years had been adverse to dividing up his estate, and recalls his wish to perpetuate his name by a worthy monument; that a college for women had been contemplated and widely indorsed, praised, and commended by distin-

¹ Manuscript narrative, pp. 44 *seq.*

guished men, and for it he had made his will. "In this did you act intelligently, wisely, and judiciously? I think you did." Now he learns he has abandoned this great project for the small scheme suggested. "O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" "Your advisers have razed your magnificent 120-gun ship down to a barge! You give up your coach and six for a wheel-barrow. Your monument which would have been more enduring than the pyramids is given up for a pine slab placed at the head of your grave." He points out the purely local character of the proposition. No one will ever hear of it outside the locality. Other places have just such schools, and they are unheard of beyond their narrow, though highly benefited, constituencies. He replies to the arguments which have been used to induce him to "sacrifice the college." It is too vast an undertaking, "too many eggs in one basket." Securities are depressed, and the \$400,000 might possibly fall to \$250,000. Even then a good start can be made, he affirms, though for a smaller college, — and tuition charges may be made, not calculated before. But he is sure of

the full value of the property. "Leave these insignificant schools to men of small means and smaller hearts. Do something, I beg of you, worthy of yourself, worthy of your ample fortune Providence has given you, and worthy of Him who gave it." And he signs the letter with a heavy heart and a trembling hand.

The story that follows is extraordinary and not free from contradictions. We have Jewett's narrative, and a few brief items from the diary of M. Vassar, Jr.,¹ and they are not reconcilable in a most vital point. Mr. Jewett says that early the next morning M. Vassar, Jr., called at his house and said, "Uncle Matthew wishes to see you immediately." He found Mr. Vassar with his note of Sunday before him. He, Mr. Vassar, asserted that "the proceedings at Albany were without his sanction"; that his nephews had urged on him the new scheme, intimating that they would then coöperate with him in the college enterprise. He had never seen the bill, though he had sought to do so, but it had been hurried to Albany and before the House. He was ignorant of its pro-

¹ Furnished me by its owner, Mr. Henry Booth.

visions, and was now convinced it was a conspiracy against the college project and he would have the bill withdrawn. He wished Jewett to go with him to his counsel's office. He declined, but after leaving Mr. Vassar considered that the lawyer might influence him wrongly, and that he would better go to his help. He found Mr. Vassar and the counsel with a copy of the bill between them. "Professor Jewett is just the man to tell us how to fill these blanks specifying the age at which boys and girls should enter the High Schools," was the courteous word of greeting to him by the lawyer. "Pushing away the paper which he had thrust under my nose, and looking him steadily in the eyes, I said, 'I care nothing for your petty village schools that you talk about, but answer me this: if the bill before the House becomes a law, will it not kill Vassar College dead?'" The counsel, confounded by the sudden attack, "stammered out: 'Mr. Vassar has given up the college, I suppose'"; and Mr. Jewett regards this as a fatal admission of the plan of the "conspirators." Mr. Vassar was angered, sprang from his chair, stamped his

foot, and exclaimed, "I have n't given up the college! Have never thought of doing it!" — and he charged the counsel with the responsibility of drawing the bill he had never seen and getting it before the Assembly without his consent, and bade him write and withdraw the bill at once. The counsel at once wrote a note stating that Mr. Vassar had changed his mind and would withdraw the bill, and handed it to Mr. Vassar. He threw it "angrily" upon the table, saying, "I have n't changed my mind. I never have had but one mind about the matter"; and instructed the counsel to write simply to stop proceedings. This was done, and Mr. Vassar and Mr Jewett mailed the letter. Mr. Vassar now gave up all hope of the coöperation of his nephews, and for "nearly a year" "never mentioned the college to them or to their legal adviser."

Such is Mr. Jewett's story of a crucial moment in the life of the great undertaking, and there is no likelihood that there is any other documentary evidence regarding it, saving a few entries in the diary of M. Vassar, Jr., and a newspaper statement regarding the

withdrawal of the bill.¹ The senior Vassar's diary is for the most part a list of items.

M. Vassar, Jr., in his journal for March 23, 1859, notes that he was "engaged with M. V. and Swift out at Mill Cove Farm, looking at a site for Female Colledge." This is an indication of coöperation a year earlier than the events under review. "Feby. 7, 1860," he writes, "With M. V. and Swift in office this day talking over matters pertaining to colledge etc., reducing the extent, etc." This last clause closely concerns the project under discussion. "Mch. 9," he enters, "Engaged this day with M. V. and Swift preparg papers for act incorporation from Legislature for Vassar high school girls and also Boys high school and Vassar Library. C. Swift goes up this day to Albany." "Mch. 13," he says, "The application for charter for Vassar Colledge was favorable before Legislature but further passage or action checked by order M. V. pr telegraph from Swift on a/c of some discrepancies in bill and phraseolgy of the name etc. — callg it Vassar high school for Bys and one of same for

¹ See chapter on "Reception of M. Vassar's Plan," p. 207.

girls, whereas it intitld as Female Colldge and other articles requirg addig etc etc" — This is all that bears on the chief issue here; but, as against Jewett's memory that the founder for nearly a year did not mention the college to these men, these two further entries may be subjoined, "Ap. 23 — M. V. had Mr. Renwick architect here last week looking over grounds Mill Cove preparatory to buildg Female Collge," — which is not conclusive evidence, — and, "Aug. 30 — M. V. M. V. Jr, C. W. Swift and T. L. Davies out at Mill Cove looking at Lands of T. L. Davies and purchasd of him 66 acres at \$200 pr acre for addition to present Lands M. V. for Female College," — which shows Jewett's remembrance at fault.

But what of the vital issue? Was there a "conspiracy," as Jewett thought? Was the founder ignorant of the intentions of his associates? Two facts are clear: the nephews were not in sympathy with their uncle's plan, though later they gave him a moderate coöperation. They had hoped and planned for a hospital, and had no interest whatever in college education for women. Jewett, on the other

hand, had no confidence in them, and was sure that they were actively working against his scheme and attempting to deprive it of its great scope if they could not destroy it. These two antagonistic interests may help us to interpret the facts.

There were discussions of modification of Jewett's accepted plans going on without his knowledge. The entry in the diary for February 7, 1860, shows that these men were considering "reducing the extent" of the plans. Financial conditions in 1860 may have influenced that, and Jewett's letter, quoted above, would indicate that he knew the objection had been urged before. The entry in the diary for March 9 shows that Mr. Vassar was with his nephew and counsel when papers were prepared incorporating a school for boys, one for girls, and a library. It is to be noted, too, that the entry for March 13 speaks of this application as for a charter for "Vassar College." Evidently, when the entry was made, the nephew did not know all the circumstances regarding the withdrawal of the bill and the mailing of the note, and assumed that the

trouble was with the "phraseology of the name" and other "discrepancies." But why the excitement of Mr. Vassar, and his anger? Can it be that his mind was changed by the letter of that Sunday; that he had contemplated cutting down the project to the three smaller undertakings, thinking a "Female College" might be made of high-school dimensions; and that Jewett's letter inflamed his old ardor and showed him clearly how the new project would destroy the old? Or did he vacillate? He certainly discussed some modified scheme and a charter for it, — as this hitherto hidden diary and a forgotten newspaper item make clear. Jewett's narrative, allowing for lapses of memory after so many years, must in all fairness be accepted as to the fact of the founder's anger and his indignant withdrawal of the bill, — and as to the counsel's understanding that Mr. Vassar had intended changing his plan as to building a real college. Yet the nephew says the bill was withdrawn because of the phraseology which substituted "school" for "Female College." Perhaps the fair conclusion is that the founder had been

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persuaded to modify his plans, and had not taken in the full extent of this till Mr. Jewett so forcibly brought him back to his earlier vision. It was surely a narrow escape for Jewett's hard-wrought plan. How large an influence the circumstance had on the subsequent relations of Jewett to the college will be seen as the history progresses.

The situation of the college has given rise to perpetual wonder as to the failure of the founder to locate it by the river. Mr. Jewett tells us that Mr. Vassar was very anxious to place it on an eminence overlooking the Hudson, and that sites were examined north and south of the city. Everywhere there were the fatal objections of a want of a water-supply and a lack of sufficient land. It did not occur to them, he tells us, that they might purchase the farm now occupied by the State Asylum and raise the water from the river. Mr. Jewett gives in his narrative another of the papers he from time to time prepared for Mr. Vassar, on the "Proper Location of a College for Young Ladies." Questions of health, exercise, exposure, social and moral influences, accessibility,

reputation for salubrity of climate and healthful conditions, abundance of water, a good sewage system, place for vegetable and botanic gardens, beauty of landscape, were all considered. Mill Cove farm was thought to meet these conditions, and Mr. Vassar made purchases there to supplement what he already owned. Jewett suggested that his opponents showed their faith in the enterprise by purchasing land in the neighborhood while the project was still a secret.¹ The work involved had become so great that Jewett gave up his school in the summer of 1860 and gave all his time to Mr. Vassar's project, "my only compensation being the consciousness of assisting in a good work," he says. He gives an extract from a letter of the time, written by him to a friend (September, 1860), saying that he had devoted all "his time and thought to Vassar College," visiting Albany and New York, "writing 100 letters," and that if it were not for his "presence and vigilance" "Mr. Vassar's

¹ A large farm owned by John Guy Vassar, contiguous to the college land, was left by his will to the Vassar Brothers' Hospital, and was subsequently purchased by the college.

greedy relatives (*rich* too) would have defeated the enterprise long ago.” He adds that by recent codicils, suggested by him and known to no other, Mr. Vassar has willed enough to the college to place the undertaking “beyond all contingency.”

In a letter written on Thanksgiving Day of that year (1860), Mr. Vassar makes abundant recognition of his appreciation of Jewett’s interest in him and his plans. He addresses him as “My very dear friend”; thanks him for his earnest interest in his temporal and his spiritual welfare, “from the very depths of my heart,” — and especially for his “sincere and ingenuous friendship.” He is “fully sensible that he has lost *friendship* with many since he commenced the Great Enterprise”; and his feelings have been deeply hurt by what he has heard within a week of the attitude of “some of the family friends in consequence of what I am doing.” “But I trust in God and my Saviour to sustain me and approve the work of my head and hands, the V. F. C. enterprise: and if I lose this friendship I cannot now help it. In this enterprise I look higher than man.”

During 1859 and 1860 there were discussions between the two as to the trustees. Jewett wished thirteen, of whom eight should be Baptists, Mr. Vassar's own denomination. He insisted that this would not make it sectarian, as was shown by Yale, Harvard, Williams, Union, as well as Brown and Rochester. The founder wished the College evangelical but unsectarian,¹ though desiring for his own connection the éclat of the enterprise, says the narrative. He wished so many of his business friends and neighbors on the Board that it became necessary, to preserve this proportion desired by the two, to increase the projected Board to twenty-nine. But no provision on the matter was placed in the charter.

The drawing-up of the charter was also now a matter of deep solicitude. Vassar was espe-

¹ This point is much on the founder's mind. In a letter of August 30, 1862, he hears rumors that the public is "disposed to make the college sectarian," "current report saying that the board of officials were all appointed, and from Baptist ranks." The President and Professor Fisher were the entire faculty then, and the Board had been named in the charter. How would Columbia, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, have borne the test? January 15, 1863, he writes Magoon regarding the advisability of instituting a chaplaincy under different denominations. (*Copies*, p. 81.)

cially anxious to guard against perversion of his purpose, and Jewett gave him the cold comfort of the experience of the Hollis professorship at Harvard and the Andover creed. The strongest guaranty, he thought, would be in a close and self-perpetuating corporation. Now, also, in the fall of 1860, printed proposals for the erection of the building were issued, before the incorporation, Renwick's designs having Mr. Vassar's approval.

One small item of interest occurs in this connection. The road on which the college fronts does not run exactly north and south. The founder wished to square the new building with the road, but Jewett persuaded him to put it on the points of the compass, urging the educating force of this.¹

When the Legislature opened on January 1,

¹ In contrast with this, when in 1878 the building for physics and chemistry was planned, M. Vassar, Jr., placed the lines to suit himself, and could not be persuaded by the professor either to set it on the meridian line, or due north and south with the lines of the Main Building, or even with the street. The lines were even changed secretly by the superintendent, but the ruse was discovered by M. Vassar, Jr., and the building has remained to nullify proper plans for the site of subsequent edifices. (Conversations with Professor Cooley and Superintendent Van Vliet.)

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1861, Mr. Jewett was in Albany with the proposed charter, and "a splendid lithograph of the proposed college edifice printed on a sheet of four feet by two and handsomely framed"; and this, conspicuously placed, attracted universal attention. Mr. Jewett also furnished the reporters written statements regarding Mr. Vassar's plans and his proposed gift. He speaks of the "highest admiration," and "great enthusiasm" with which the matter was received by the public and the Legislature. One must balance this, however, by consideration of the absorbing interest at that date in the political situation. The very Union was at stake, and the papers of that month have small space for woman's education or Vassar Female College. The New York "Herald" of January 18, 1861, in its report of the Legislature, sets this item in very small print among the discussions bearing on the state of the country and the danger of war: —

The House has been at work in earnest this morning and has really turned off considerable work. The Vassar Female College Bill passed that body this morning by a large majority, thus

giving Mr. Vassar an opportunity of appropriating a portion of his immense fortune in a way that will be of some public benefit. It was stated in a debate to-day that he had already set apart 200 acres for the college. This would look as though he contemplated a grand Central Park and playground for the institution — all to be kept up on a magnificent scale.¹

Dr. Jewett had assisted Mr. Vassar in selecting his counselors, a band of trustees of twenty-nine men. He tells us that now, knowing it to be an essential step that the money should be placed in the hands of the corporation, and not retained in the founder's, subject to the intrigues or objections of "the enemies of the college," he undertook what he had not dared before. In his letter to the Trustees, inclosing a printed copy of the charter, and calling the first meeting of the Board, he "made Mr. Vassar say: 'At which time and place I shall deliver into your hands the funds I intend to appropriate for this purpose.'" He "repaired to Mr. Vassar's office" for his signature to the letters. When Mr. Vassar read the sentence quoted above, "he exclaimed with some sur-

¹ See chapter on "Reception of Mr. Vassar's Plan," for further newspaper comment.

prise, ‘Why, it is not necessary for me to give up my money into the hands of the Trustees, is it?’” Mr Jewett replied that it was, of course, in Mr. Vassar’s option, but it struck him that it would not be courteous to ask these gentlemen to come and help him build the college and furnish them with no money for the purpose. They would always respect his wishes and he would still control the funds through them. “Yes, I see,” said Mr. Vassar, and signed the letters. Mr. Jewett says he sealed the letters and “*ran to the post-office*,” fearing some change of mind. We must not forget, however, that though this series of events must have been deeply impressed on his memory, Mr. Jewett had later passed through troubled waters in his relation to Mr. Vassar and had written these impressions many years after certain convictions as to Mr. Vassar’s “vacillation” had become *fixed* in his mind. But we have no other witness as to these events, and the writer was a high-minded man, still thankful for his part in the organization of the college, and without a regret as to his having left it.¹

¹ See his letter to Dr. Raymond, 1873, quoted later.

Mr. Jewett, at the founder's request, now prepared the programme for the first meeting of the Board, the necessary committees, the proper resolutions, — submitting all to Mr. Vassar, — and "writing out in full the address he should make to the Trustees."¹ The plan for the meeting, and the committees, were talked over with the resident Trustees, and an effort was made, and approved by Mr. Vassar, to reduce the Executive Committee to three, himself and two others, who, says Dr. Jewett, had at every point antagonized the plans. This "plot" was defeated at the meeting, and the Committee was increased by two who were "fast friends of the college."²

Mr. Vassar "had an eye for dramatic effect," and arranged the minutest details of the occasion so as to "invest the scene with real moral grandeur and sublimity," and he read his address "with real feeling and true dignity." Jewett's narrative says "he had copied" what he, Jewett, had furnished him,

¹ Jewett's manuscript narrative, p. 67.

² Dr. Jewett's "personal equation" must be borne in mind here. These men all gave steadfast service to the college.

"having adopted as his own the sentiments which had almost daily been urged upon him for the previous five years." Can we now determine the relative part in it of Jewett and Vassar?

That the ideas were originally Dr. Jewett's, there can be little doubt. Mr. Vassar makes ample acknowledgment in the address to other sources for his great idea. Very likely much of the language may be Jewett's, modified to suit the very simple style of the founder, — a style well known to us from his "Communications" to the trustees, which we have in printed form, and which extend over years beyond Jewett's influence. The noble address is in print,¹ and all who read it must see at a glance that no one unused to the study of education could have expressed its ideas, in general and in detail. Certain views here, however, are undoubtedly the founder's. He went even beyond Dr. Jewett, in his interpretation of "catholicity"; and his objections to making the college "a charity school" are known to us

¹ Cf. Lossing's *Vassar College and its Founder*, pp. 91 seq.; also *Communications of the Founder*.

from other sources, and his recommendations as to the use of the funds may well have been quite as much his own as they certainly were Jewett's. One hopes that the golden words, now printed in the annual catalogue of the college, may be Mr. Vassar's very own: "It occurred to me that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development."¹

M. Vassar, Jr., was chosen Treasurer of the college, and Mr. Jewett was chosen President by "unanimous choice," says Lossing, a Trustee. President Anderson, at the founder's request, presented his name. Jewett says three blanks were cast, and he attributes them to his three "foes." The minutes of the meeting

¹ There should be no criticism of Mr. Vassar for using all he got — and made his own — from those more familiar with educational subjects than he could be. He was an uneducated man who had trained himself by good reading and simple speech, but he was facing educators, clergymen, lawyers, men of the world, and naturally sought help. In August, 1861, he asks Youmans for an *outline* of an address for the cornerstone laying, to which he says he will add his own ideas as time may permit. Youmans sent it, and the founder rejected it as unsuitable and "too elaborate" and lacking in "pithiness." He objects to Youmans's charge as too large, as he only asked an *outline*. (Letters, August 31, September 5, October 11.)

record 26 as present. The ballot stood, 23 for Jewett, 1 for Babcock (Jewett's vote?), leaving 2 unaccounted for. Again, we must recall the date of this memoir, — eighteen years after. We shall soon see, however, that the opposition to Jewett was not imaginary, though he may have forgotten that that did not connote opposition to the *college*, which was now an assured fact, — and a fact for which he was ultimately responsible. He was fully conscious of this, at the time, as a private letter of this date, given in his narrative, shows, and he was equally sure that he had attained his end against the opposition of the nephews and despite the frequent swervings in his purpose of Mr. Vassar himself, which made the outcome seem uncertain to Jewett till after the meeting of February 26, 1861. If he was justified in his feeling of triumph, it may also be true that he underestimated the greatness of spirit which enabled this founder, self-made and self-educated, to seize ideas suggested to him, and to overcome his natural disposition to thrifty saving in a great gift which took from him at one stroke half his slowly earned fortune. In

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his impatience with the founder, and especially his indiscreet expression of it in this private letter, Jewett reveals the causes which eventually unseated him and gave triumph to his enemies. But this was yet three years away.

IV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT JEWETT

GROUND was broken for the new building June 4,¹ by the founder, in the presence of M. Vassar, Jr., Cornelius Dubois, C. Swan, the Reverend H. Malcolm, and the farmer, workmen, and builders. "Few remarks by M. V. and Malcolm Revd Mr. M. asked God's blessing on the undertaking."² The building went steadily on through these war years, and the various committees studied and reported on plans for apparatus, museum, library, etc.³ A portrait of the founder, by order of the Trustees, was painted by Elliott, and this and Wright's portrait were exhibited at the Baptist Church, there being no other place of sufficient

¹ Entered as June 4, in Minutes of Joint Committee; otherwise confirmatory of the diary. M. Vassar, Jr., enters in his diary June 3,—probably a slip.

² Diary of M. Vassar, Jr. The spade used is owned by the college and passed down from class to class, on Class Day. A part of the first spadeful of earth was placed in a jar and is in the Vassar Museum.

³ Diary, June 25, 1862.

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size. The first story of the college was up when, November 5,¹ the walls were covered for the winter — “all cleanly completed etc.” It is interesting to note that Mr. Vassar prophesied then that, with the vast expenditure of the Government for the war, money would run down to four per cent, as “no place or business actively to invest” occurs; that bank stock will be poor; and that New York Central will go to par within the year; and proposes investments in “1st mortgage Bonds Erie Hudson River and Harlem — says will pay the oyster supper to the committee if it does not prove true.”²

After one year of extensive correspondence and visits to schools and colleges, and participation in constant discussions of details of construction and plans for a course of study, Mr. Jewett met the Board (February, 1862) with the suggestion that he go abroad to study systems of female education prevailing in the most enlightened countries of Europe, and “with the view of otherwise advancing the interests of the college,” and of reporting his

¹ Diary.

² Diary, January 27, 1862.

conclusions to the Board. Jewett himself says that he was aware that there was little to learn in Europe for this new cause, but that Mr. Vassar originated the idea, with the desire to have Jewett visit the birthplace of the founder, obtain photographs and gather the traditions of "the patriarchs of the village," and with the thought also that the mission would lend éclat to the new college.¹

M. Vassar, Jr., regarded this mission in another light. His entry for February 25, 1862, recording the meeting, — and mentioning the appointment of a professor of chemistry, Mr. R. A. Fisher, and a proposition to loan him \$1000 "for travelling in Europe to improve himself" and examine new "Laboratorys and chemical apparatus etc.,"² adds:—

Mr. Jewett also asked permission to visit Europe for obtaining information in any new schools and considered would be acquisition to him and college — also that his salary may be continued \$2000 pr annum — to be absent to June 1863 — M. V. Jr. opposed it on the ground that his services requird

¹ He gave to Jewett a letter to his relatives — Letter of March 15, 1862.

² Minutes of meeting of Trustees, also February, 1862.

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at home in reply to letters from sundry institutions — applications for office and students also large number coming to the city on college information sight seeing etc and his absence it would fall or devolve on M. V. who ought not and cannot have his mind more taxed than at present — C. W. Swift obliged to leave meeting on ^{a/c} business left his written protest to above — and the only two who opposed it, M. V. the donor having spoken in favour it — none other of the board said ought against and was carried without oppositions. Swift nor M. V. Jr saying ought further about same (Jewett's persuasiveness and flattery to M. V. sways him as I judge little, too much of the Yankee palavar or Jesuitical principle) as no attention is given to the great instruction of young Ladies in Europe — I cannot see that any benefit to be granted or received in his visit — this country is far in advance anything in Europe in Female Education.

It will be noted that the feelings toward M. Vassar, Jr., and his closest advisers, expressed by Mr. Jewett, are amply reciprocated by these gentlemen, — though for the time they were veiled in private letters and a secret diary. They were, however, working toward effective utterance.

Mr. Jewett was absent eight months. He

had his salary of \$2000, but no allowance for expenses.¹ He tells us that, though he was not able to secure material "for such a general and statistical report as was contemplated," "yet his mission was not without valuable results." That must have been true, though the printed report of this visit does not impress the reader as either profound or particularly enlightening. It shows careful study of the schools, which had, however, small results to suggest for a woman's *college*, — indicates the high position of religious training, emphasizes some of the methods of instruction, the attention to domestic economy, to exercise and health, the restrictions as to dress, the simplicity of diet, the prominence of the "accomplishments," and of the study of modern languages. The President learned much, however, from obvious defects, and he was, be it remembered, an observer of long and varied experience. "His own view," as he states in his manuscript, is given "in the last paragraph of the published report which he presented to the Trustees," and which he there copies. He recites his visits to the great

¹ Minutes of Board, February, 1862.

libraries, his study of their systems of shelving, cataloguing, etc.; visits to the great art galleries, with like practical object; to the great exhibition of "philosophical apparatus," then in London; to the telescope manufactory of the Frauenhofers; the collections of the museums of natural history with observations on the mounting and exhibit of specimens; the study of all he can see of educational methods; the latest and most approved school buildings for girls. He added, with great truth, that the most important results could not be "imprinted on paper," but would be felt in future years in chapel, classrooms, and lecture halls, in library, cabinets, and art gallery. His impressions would be "transferred by a spiritual photography" to "the minds and hearts and lives" of the hundreds the college would send forth.

His estimate is juster than that of his opponent, Matthew Vassar, Jr. The "report was lengthy and much of the same to the point in reference to Education of Females or Women in Europe, but on the whole too much and irksome."¹ Mr. Swift moved a complimentary

¹ Diary, June 30, 1863.

resolution and proposed filing the report in the archives,¹ but though M. Vassar, Jr., seconded the same, several at once arose and requested that the document be printed,— and this was done.²

Jewett was now busy in preparing his scheme for the educational work of the college and in securing candidates for its faculty. Jewett says, and very naturally and probably, that the work fell on him, as the “distinguished gentlemen” of his Committee were too closely absorbed in their own business to assist him “except by their invaluable suggestions and counsels.” These men were Presidents Anderson and Robinson, Nathan Bishop, John H. Raymond, Rufus Babcock. It is to be observed, however, that Jewett’s processes were already too rapid for some of his colleagues. M. Vassar, Jr.’s, diary tells us, under date of June 30, 1863, when Jewett’s report on his tour was presented, that Jewett’s “intention was appointment of some Professors but was voted down as premature the meeting was

¹ Minutes of Board, June, 1863.

² Jewett’s manuscript narrative.

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harmonious," etc. This is confirmed by a letter of Nathan Bishop, dated June 23, 1863, in which he protests to Dr. Jewett that no opportunity has been given them to investigate fully the claims of his candidates (Farrar and Tenney); that private letters from friends are more reliable than general testimonials; but that if the Committee wishes to indorse the action, he will not stand in the way, but will ask to be transferred to some other committee. This is from the man to whom in the later troubles Jewett refers as his *Fidus Achates*. A few months later, December 15, 1863, M. Vassar, Jr., records in his diary, "this day of the Ex Committee — some sharp-shooting by chairman M. V. against President J — for Bill presented as expenses on Faculty, — going N. Y. enquiry for some Teachers without consultation and without any use at present — J. has apologized and sees error — making such charge of expense some \$20 — while is Receiving his \$2000 per year salary etc."

We shall see shortly that another factor, not generally known, but probably temporarily very potent, was at work in the direction of

undermining Jewett's influence, and that so far as we know, Jewett himself was unaware of it. Before facing that, however, it is necessary to set forth the striking scheme which Jewett formulated and reported and which was printed by the Board, and submitted "to the press and to the leading educators of the country."¹ So far as our Northern colleges are concerned, it was in plan a new departure, suggested evidently by Dr. Jewett's long Southern experience and his familiarity with the working of such schemes in Southern colleges, though he attributes it to Europe and calls it the university system. It is rather remarkable that it was reported favorably to the Board by a committee which included such experienced Northern educators as Anderson, Robinson, Raymond (the future President), and Bishop. It speaks well for their largeness of mind and their willingness to allow the President a free hand in the new field. Though the scheme was never tried, owing to Jewett's resignation, it is worthy of examination here.

¹ Jewett had it copied out in his manuscript, — 41 pp. of legal cap.

as the plan approved by himself and the founder for the new college, and especially as he claims that it influenced all the following changes, and that through thirteen years the tendency was toward its abandoned provisions.¹ The founder himself "heartily approves" of it in his address to the Trustees,² and states that his attention had been called to it in 1862 by a "gentleman quite familiar with not only the theory, but to a great extent, with the practise of that system, so that when our President returned from Europe I was already prepared to advocate and urge its introduction here." He adds that he does not regard the system as a novelty, even in this country, and finds no reason why it should not work with women as it has with men. This again brings into view the influence, nowhere else referred to in print, which was steadily undermining Jewett, — though apparently he was unconscious of it. It may bear on Jewett's originality in his suggestion of the scheme.

The plan was, in short, as Jewett calls it, a

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 126.

² *Communications*, February, 1864.

university scheme, as practiced in Southern colleges and even seminaries. Nevertheless, the document, as a scheme for a great woman's college, was a daring novelty. It plainly defined a college as distinct from a seminary or academy in its breadth and depth and permanency; called for a course of study of the highest grade, and liberal beyond any then in vogue; sketched the subjects that must be comprised in it; demanded reform of all present methods; questioned the procrustean four years' course; introduced a broad election of studies on a group system; challenged current education for the lack of it, for low standards, for want of incentive and tests; and proposed classification of knowledge and study by subjects. There would be a series of schools; thus, of languages, of mathematics, history and political economy, etc., and elections among them. Teaching would be without textbooks, and the examinations would be written, and the completion of a definite number of schools would entitle the student to a diploma and to the degree of the college, M.A.¹

¹ As at the University of Virginia.

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The objections, familiar to all who have discussed elective systems, are duly considered, and the advantages urged. Nine schools are suggested, and a call made for the full number of professors and teachers. He seems to think seven professors and from six to ten teachers could carry the work, but the accompanying resolution suggests nine heads. He sketches ably the kind of men needed in a woman's college, and sets a high standard of scholarship and efficiency. The founder, in his address at the meeting of February, 1864, in relation to this, says that so large a number of men at the start will drain the resources of the college, and urges eloquently the claims of women, instancing Maria Mitchell, and in art, Emma Church.¹ He says, however, that he does not urge woman's claims from economical reasons. "We must pay fairly and even generously, whatsoever instruments we use."²

¹ He had purchased several copies of "old masters" from her — for the college art gallery.

² He writes Henry Barnard, February 2, 1864, that some wish to begin with female professors and teachers only. To Charles A. Raymond, February 6, 1864, he says his own idea is "women to educate her sex." (*Copies*, p. 90.)

Very striking, too, is Jewett's insistence on a good library, the best apparatus, a good art gallery, and large endowments. Nor does the report neglect the non-academic needs,—the demand for full provision for a refined domestic life, for nurse, kitchen, matron, janitor's department. He discusses even the rates, which he hoped to be able to put as low as \$200 per year,—the arts being extras.

The standards set were not high, and contemplated entering young girls for the "junior class of any school" on a very low requirement, but the completion of the school contemplated a worthy course of study; and, unlike that of most previous efforts in "female education," here was a *real curriculum*.

At this point we recur to another influence that had great weight with Mr. Vassar, and which has already been referred to. Save for the single reference to this man just quoted from the founder's "Communications to the Trustees" there is apparently no mention of him. Where almost all letters of the time have disappeared, fourteen long and very closely written ones from him to the founder are pre-

served, and near a score more addressed to Mr. Cyrus Swan, Mr. Vassar's near friend and adviser. These letters discuss all that concerns the college, the plan of education, appointments and pay of a faculty, buildings, plans for art gallery and museum, and all with the assumption that the writer is an expert beyond all others in "female education." That they finally had great weight in determining Jewett's relation to Mr. Vassar and the college, there can be no doubt, and yet in all we have from Jewett there is no reference to him.

Charles A. Raymond had been a teacher in the South. Like Jewett, he was a Northerner, apparently resident in New Haven, where his mother was still living in 1864 (when these letters cease). He had studied, but not graduated, at Yale, and had been in the Yale Theological School. He lived fifteen years in the South,¹ and was finally connected with the Chesapeake Female College of Virginia. He says he was fourteen years in the cotton-growing States.² In 1847 he was in New

¹ Letter of December 29, 1862.

² He has articles in *Harper's Magazine*, September, October, and November, 1863.

Orleans, and several years he spent in South Carolina. He was an incorporator of the Chesapeake Female College in 1860, and President. Driven North by the war, he opened a school in Newburgh, whose "insignificance frets" him, a "parlor school."¹ He preached one summer in Poughkeepsie, his ancestral home and the burial-place of his forbears,² and became acquainted thus with Mr. Vassar and talked much with him over his project.³ He

¹ Letter of August 9, 1862.

² Letter to Swan, April 8, 1864.

³ On Charles A. Raymond, letters from friends in Virginia to the author; letter from Paymaster-General's office, Board of Education of Virginia, etc. "He was distinguished in appearance, gracious in manner, and always well dressed." Chesapeake Female College occupied the site of the Soldiers' Home, Hampton. The original building has only recently (1912) been torn down. Raymond was President little more than a year, if he left at the beginning of the war. The curriculum of the college was sent the author by Miss Jane E. Davis, editor of the *Southern Workman*, and was furnished her by President Tyler, of William and Mary. It may well be offered here as typical of Southern women's colleges in 1860.

Chesapeake Female College — Curriculum

Intellectual and Moral Philosophy: Watts, Treatise on the Mind; Abercrombie, Intellectual Philosophy; Abercrombie, Moral Philosophy.

History: Goodrich, History of the United States; Goodrich, History of England; Goodrich, History of France; Goodrich, Ancient History; Taylor, Universal History.

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became principal then of the Hamilton Female Institute, and later, in September, 1863, be-

Geography: Mitchell, School Geography; Mitchell, Geographical Reader.

Grammar: Smith, New English Reader.

Reading: Russell, Young Ladies' Reader; Worcester, 3d Book; The British Poets.

Mathematics: Emerson, First Part; Colburn, First Lessons; Colburn, Sequel; Davies' First Lessons, Algebra; Davies' Légendre, Geometry; Davies' Bourdon, Algebra; Davies' Trigonometry.

Natural Sciences: Olmstead, Natural Philosophy; Draper, Chemistry.

Latin: Gould's Adams, Grammar; L'Homond, Epitome Histoire Sacre; Zumpt and Schmidt, Cæsar; Zumpt and Schmidt, Virgil; Zumpt and Schmidt, Cicero; Zumpt and Schmidt, Horace; Folsom, Livy; Leverett, Dictionary.

French: Addick, Elements; Gérard, Course (Grammar); Bibliothèque de l'Enfance; St.-Pierre, Paul et Virginie; Mme. Guizot, Pauvre José; Voltaire, Charles XII; Saintine, Picciola; Bossuet, Discours sur l'Histoire universelle; Mme. Sévigné, Lettres; Noël et Chapsal, Grammaire; Lafontaine, Fables; Corneille, Chefs d'Œuvre; Racine, Chefs d'Œuvre; Chapsal, Cours de Littérature Française; Lamartine, Méditations poétiques; Victor Hugo, Odes et Ballades; Several Dramas from the most distinguished modern writers.

German: Follen, German Grammar; Follen, German Reader; Schiller, Die Jungfrau von Orleans; Goethe, Torquato Tasso; Schiller, Don Karlos; Goethe, Egmont; Wieland, Oberon; Lessing, Laocoön.

For Spanish and Italian, the most approved Text Books are used.

came a clerk in the office of the Paymaster-General. He resigned in July, 1864, to take a hospital chaplaincy in the army, and he was honorably mustered out in October, 1866. From a letter of Mr. Vassar's¹ we learn that Raymond had already made "valued suggestions" to him regarding the college and these had commended themselves to him. Evidently Raymond had already suggested himself as a Vice-President, for Mr. Vassar tells him that he hopes the discussion of this or any other matter concerning the college may be had "without partiality or private considerations." He has no thought, he assures him, that Raymond has any personal motive, but adds that "candor impels" him to acknowledge that if it were consistent for the college to give him that office he knows of no man who could fill it better. He has written "Professor Jewett," *who was in Europe*, on the matter, and it will remain open till his return, when he will take it up with "enlarged earnest." He favors Raymond's "appointment to that department in the college" because it is Raymond's sug-

¹ July 28, 1862; in *Copies*, p. 42, it is July 30.

gestion ("first came from you") and because his "large experience in female education entitles" his "judgment to consideration of more than ordinary respect." He refers to his "experience of eighteen years' devotion to the profession of teaching." "You have talents and the college has money," "beside the college have grounds," — and on them should erect residences for professors as Raymond has suggested. Here is a new note! Jewett had suggested the family idea, — residence in the building, — which was adopted, but in his absence here was an influence, at once very potent, which was swaying the founder's mind in directions that might promote friction and trouble.

Raymond at once suggested to him the "university system," which we have already outlined as from Jewett's report, *a year later*. He says Jewett agrees with him in sentiment, and will see it in operation in Europe and learn how it can be applied to girls. Already in use in the University of Virginia, Raymond had himself used it in his "college." This would put Vassar above competition, but they must keep quiet lest some one steal "our thunder."

Let it be marked here that Jewett, for many years the head of the most flourishing of the girls' schools of the South,¹ and a trained student of education, could hardly have owed to Raymond his first knowledge of this system so well-known in the South.² It may be easily true that *Mr. Vassar* first heard of the system from Raymond. It is interesting also to discover thus early a certain guarded animus toward the absent President. Raymond thanks Mr. Vassar for his good opinion, even if he cannot "*flatter* as well as our good friend the *Doctor*." Jewett had been made an LL.D. by Rochester in 1861. As the correspondence proceeds, Jewett is treated with less consideration.

Raymond's suggestions cover a wide field. He could canvass the field, preaching, introducing himself, on behalf of the college, to the public, visiting, meeting parents, etc., while the founder and the President were attending to important matters at home.³ He ingratiates

¹ But the President of Judson College says, December 11, 1912, Jewett did not use the system there.

² Cf. letter of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Virginia, December 18, 1912.

³ Letter, August 9, 1862.

himself with the founder, — is grateful for his financial encouragement in the enterprise at Hamilton,¹ but has chiefly on his mind, always, such a plan for Vassar College as shall bring out the founder's sagacity and goodness and glory. He meets the financial depression with a plan to save the endowing of professorships, though fearing he may run counter to "brother Jewett's ideas." Teachers will do better if dependent in large measure on their success and the amount of their work for their support. "The best of men need an incentive," and there is nothing "like self-interest" for that. Building, grounds, repairs, furniture, renewal of library and apparatus, he would endow, — and a fund to educate talented poor girls, but *not* professorships, — and to this he returns again and again. "Right men would pay themselves"; and to Mr. Vassar's objection that thus they might get too much, he replies that if they take their own risks they should have what they can make.² He claims that the professors at Madison (now Colgate)

¹ Letters, August 13, 28, September 12, 22, 1862.

² September 22, and November 25, 1862. Cf. M. Vassar's letter, October 2, 1862 (p. 50 of *Copies*).

University approve his plan.¹ He discusses details in reply to Mr. Vassar's suggestions,² *they having agreed* to "set aside" "the endowment of professorships." The founder does not like "the teachers' partnership system." Then make the college the chief sharer in the profits, but for the benefit of teachers, says Raymond, a sort of accruing insurance fund, the founder to guarantee against deficits till the fund is accumulated.³

A new idea is broached in his letter of February 24, 1863, — one calculated to appeal to a thrifty, self-made man, though in this case happily ineffective. There must be an art gallery. A large expenditure, however, would be foolish. Buy a few pictures. Get a good painter as professor of art; engage all his time; let him paint pictures for the gallery. In the course of years there would be a fine collection. And so with a museum. Let the professor collect, stuff birds, etc., make exchanges; gradually build up a worthy museum. Happily the

¹ Letter, December 29. The founder assents to the plan in letter of October 2.

² Letter, October 25, 1862. ³ Letter, February 6, 1863.

fine art gallery and museum of the college were gained by other advice and by the founder's generous provision. He refers now to his "very huge correspondence with Mr. Jewett." Raymond is a prolific writer, — his letters are very long, full of interest, clever in expression, and in a fine and cultivated hand.

He is especially antagonistic to the application of American college ideals to the education of girls. He finds an absurd excess in mathematics at Hamilton, for example.¹ No system that calls for four years at college, that demands a like age with boys, or expects such a system as has been worked out for them, can succeed. By March, 1863, he is discussing this with Jewett. They are "butting their heads together in the dark," Jewett not getting his ideas very clearly and Raymond "wholly ignorant of his." Was Jewett already suspicious of this interest, — real, sincere, we must believe, — but also sinister? He had proposed some kind of coöperation: if his time and advice were valuable, the college could afford to pay for it. This brought out their differences so distinctly

¹ Letter, December 12, 1862.

as to make his "anxieties and writings in the college behalf appear simply ridiculous." And then he outlines their two plans to let Mr. Vassar "amuse yourself by comparison." He knew *his* views and Mr. Vassar's harmonized and he was trying "to work them into grand embodiment." Jewett seemed to have in mind only another big school on the stereotyped plan, like Crittenden's (the Packer Institute), Abbott's (Spingler), only bigger. "It is what any man, who had no special object to accomplish, would do." Raymond would give the founder the honor of a radical reform. No teacher should be elected but to carry out *his* wishes. "Jewett does not believe in binding future generations." "I tell you you can't be too safe." He had been working for something live, and it is proving to be an abortion. Jewett's plan cannot do anything for the memory of the founder unless to "build the biggest building for school purposes in the country." Jewett's plan will bring anarchy and confusion. "I am not certain Mr. Jewett is up to the demands of the crisis." He urges the founder to decision before the June meeting, when mat-

ters may be beyond his reach.¹ He asks if he wishes to have his endowment go for “no special purpose” “excepting that Mr. Jewett prevailed on you to do it,” or will he show himself intelligent, wise, sagacious? Who opened to him the whole scheme while Jewett was in Europe? *He* “did all that,” convincing Jewett, working out details for Mr. Vassar’s reputation, not for Jewett’s. The founder must assume the credit. He had only needed some one to shape up *his* ideas, and what Jewett could not do, he, Raymond, had done. And now he is willing to help him prepare his address to the Trustees!

This letter is indorsed by the founder, “*not answered*”! Was he becoming suspicious of the claims of Raymond, or were his eyes open now to the fact that Jewett did know something of his problem, and had not gained all his ideas from Raymond, as the latter in subsequent letters² claimed he had, saying Jewett had “sucked him dry” and cast him off? Or did he see the impractical nature of many of his correspondent’s suggestions?

1 Letter, May 24, 1863.

2 Letter to Swan.

The next day,¹ Raymond sends another letter, also indorsed "not answered." It exhorts the founder to assert himself. He is prepared to submit a plan for selection of professors and to secure the college against contemptible scheming. He would simply drop all the men engaged and select "an entirely new set of young men" "presented by you as your choice." The selfish plotting of Trustees must be stopped. The will of the founder must be supreme. "Shall I say more?" he adds. A reply was written June 5, 1863, by Mr. Vassar.² It relates Vassar's visit to Dr. Willard Parker, an order for *rest* as essential, and the necessary withdrawal from these perplexing questions of organization, etc. He has chosen a President "in whom I have unshaken confidence," and he throws "the great responsibility cheerfully" on him. He thanks Raymond for his counsel, but he *must* withdraw from these things. He sends him, by way of acknowledgment, a note of Raymond's he holds for \$262 and interest. How badly and with what ill temper Raymond

¹ Letter, May 25, 1863.

² Copied by Mr. Schou and signed by him for Mr. Vassar (Letter Book, p. 68).

received this is shown in his manner of address of a letter of August 13, 1863, no longer beginning "Dear Friend," but "Dear Sir," and he is "Very respectfully" instead of his habitual "Very truly." He accepts an "enclosure," but only temporarily and "from force of circumstances." Jewett had grossly insulted him, he says, and so he was "not surprised at its tone" (the letter of Mr. Vassar). Jewett had pledged himself to alter nothing in the "plan" before he gave it to him at "his importunity," and he, Raymond, then had written Mr. Vassar "a private letter concerning the authorship of the plan." Jewett had made it "ridiculous and wholly impracticable,"—"a mongrel affair." When it is published, he will address the press on it over his own signature, and the Trustees also. Evidently, he is sorely irritated, full of enmity to Jewett, and persistent toward the founder.

To this irritated letter, Mr. Vassar responds by Mr. Schou's hand¹ on September 2, after an enforced absence in Newport. He, Vassar, has tried to be "neutral" between Jewett and

¹ Letter, *Copies*, p. 70.

Raymond. He regrets that Raymond's feelings should be cool toward him, — but his letter also begins, "Dear Sir," and is signed, "Very respectfully." February 6, 1864, he writes again, seeking further counsel in the old lines, as the organization will be settled at the coming meeting. He had loaned Jewett all his old letters to him when in Europe in which he had discussed with him C. A. Raymond's views, and had not got them back. He (Vassar) believes, as he did twenty years ago, that woman should educate her own sex.

In April of 1864, Raymond is at work in Washington. He has written Swan many letters in the mean time (dated at the office of the Paymaster-General), beginning in January. Evidently Mr. Swan was drawing him out, and probably securing his opinion of Jewett and his work, regarding which a small body of the Trustees had serious doubts. Raymond's letters are very long and rehearse all the material already reviewed, but his caution has given way to vituperation against Jewett. He writes as if Jewett had never heard of the plan of studies he reports until he had

instructed him in it, and that in fact Jewett had never had any experience in any kind of a college. It is well to remember that Raymond's was limited to institutions really of school grade, as was true of the Chesapeake Female College, among the incorporators of which his name appears in March, 1860, one year before the war.¹ The assertions regarding this are reiterated again and again, and he claims that even the smallest details of the "schools" were arranged by himself, excepting the school of philosophy, which was Jewett's own, — and such a scheme! Jewett had even sought him out at Hamilton. For Mr. Vassar, Jewett, he says, seemed to care no more than for a fat orange he was to squeeze, and toward Raymond himself he "cooled off wonderfully" as soon as he had gained what he wished.

On February 1, he tells Swan that he has urged the founder against all haste till everything is prepared, and Jewett's plan is not ready and will not work. This may well have influenced the decision to postpone its adoption,

¹ Letter from the Keeper of the Rolls of Virginia, December 5, 1912.

made at the meeting that month, when the founder spoke so wisely and affectingly of the delay and of the need to be *ready*. Raymond offers detailed criticism, too, of the "plan," — that it offered too much for the pupils' good, that the groups needed rearrangement and adjustment, that too much is left to the caprice of teachers, who need more law, and who should carry out the founder's views. Jewett's effort to get great names is mere advertising; the Trustees must make him "behave."

The letters follow one another in close order. On February 3, 1864, Raymond asserts that Mr. Vassar offered him the vice-presidency (a statement not supported in the founder's letters), but that Jewett would not have him under *any* name. He, Raymond, would have a President unconnected with the educational work. Jewett might fill this place! Then the Vice-President would control the educational administration — and Jewett could not possibly do this. A few professors, solely for the classroom, could be gradually eliminated, and the *teachers* meet the demand. No families would live in the building, and no chaplain

unless a woman! Thus he rails at Jewett's plans, and instances his placing the new "cabinets" in the attic! He is willing to go to the coming Trustees' meeting and answer questions!

On February 12, Raymond sees that something has happened to loose Jewett's hold on the founder, on Swan, and a few others. Would it be improper for him to ask what? He wonders if he should not tell Mr. Vassar what he knows of Jewett's "representations" of him "in the matter of founding V. F. C." But does he intrude?

Evidently Swan keeps his own counsel and encourages Raymond, for on the 17th of February (Swan had written him the 15th), just before the great meeting, he attacks Jewett as treacherous, false to the founder, and true only to himself. Are they not guilty of complicity if, knowing these things, they conceal them from Mr. Vassar? Then definitely, under five points, he indicates his opinion: Jewett claims all the credit for the college, having found Mr. Vassar uncertain, vacillating, — and talked him into it. He is insubordinate to Mr. Vas-

sar's wishes, and is heartless in his determination to get his money. He disregards the founder's wish regarding sectarianism (a charge that he knew would arouse Swan). He will not appoint a professor who feels indebted to the founder rather than to himself. He always puts himself in the foreground, not Mr. Vassar. He is incompetent, no scholar, without experience, without fidelity to the founder, an "incubus," and he stole his university system of education! He, Raymond, does not want his place. He would take the vice-presidency if it came as Mr. Vassar's gift. It is to be remembered that these letters were drawn out by Mr. Swan, that Raymond assumed for himself ultimate wisdom regarding "female education," and that uneasiness regarding Jewett was felt by four or five Trustees, including Swan, and possibly by the founder. Thus the correspondence, hitherto unknown to readers of the history of Vassar, is seen to be an important factor in the judgment of Jewett.

This episode without doubt prepared Mr. Vassar and Mr. Swan for distrust of Jewett and

for an exaggeration of the importance of his criticisms in the crucial letter which forced his resignation. Perhaps there can be as little doubt that Dr. Jewett was as fully informed regarding the "university system" as Charles A. Raymond himself, though the latter asserts that he could not grasp his ideas as rapidly as the plain business man, the founder, had. If, as seems certain, Jewett now knew of this active counter-current, it may account in part for the extreme expressions in the private letters whose discovery compelled his resignation.

The letter, or letters, referred to were written just before the meeting of February, 1864, when Dr. Jewett hoped to carry through three distinct measures of paramount importance, — the adoption of the plan of educational organization, the agreement to open the college that fall, the appointment of professors. He was fully aware of opposition to all of these, — harassed and anxious, — and as he writes Dr. Bishop, later, "almost prostrated" by the excitement of "the last six or seven weeks," by "official and personal insults" and "the fatal blow which he believed to be aimed at the

college," and by the "vile misrepresentations" and slanders used to alienate Mr. Vassar. He knew his enemies regarded him as "obnoxious" and were resolved to remove him, and "sleepless nights and loss of appetite" had "combined to make him sick in body, mind, and heart."¹

Under these conditions he wrote a letter to Dr. Hague, a Trustee, in response to his request for information, pointing out the subjects that must be considered and the oppositions that must be encountered. No copy of that letter has thus far been discovered, though the author of it wrote it to six people, Anderson, Bishop, Raymond, Robinson, Magoon, — as well as Hague. Bishop, we know, burned his copy.² In his story Jewett speaks freely of it, but writes with the calmness of the distance of many years. He says he stated the matters, especially "the grand questioning of the opening" in the fall, the arguments on both sides, "the desperate efforts which would be made by the opposition and spoke of Mr. Vassar as

¹ Letter to Bishop, February 27, 1864.

² Letter to Jewett, March 24, and Letter of March 8, 1864.

inclined to accede to their wishes." He "expressed the conviction, however, that Mr. Vassar would yield readily to the Trustees if the majority were decidedly in favor" of the opening. But in opening his heart freely and confidentially to his correspondent he referred to the difficulties that had environed him and the obstacles which the malice of his enemies threw in his way at every step. "*Added to these, I remarked, 'Mr. Vassar grows more fickle and childish every day.'*"¹

This must be a very mild memory of a very heated letter. We have five letters of Jewett's, strangely preserved — where so much has disappeared — in the college archives, and evidently placed there by Dr. Bishop, to whom they were addressed. They are written after the meeting, but they throw a backward light on the contents of the letter. Bishop advised him against writing so "freely,"² and, as just related, had burned his own copy. Jewett says³ that the letter was written under great excitement and handled "men and motives with no

¹ Manuscript narrative, pp. 133, 140.

² February 29.

³ March 8.

gloved hands," regardless of self-interest and self-preservation, in love and anxiety for the college. Bishop refers¹ to its severe expressions and strong censure. Kelly, who returned from a journey at this time, and to whom Jewett told his story, said that he "ought not to have written such a letter to any man," and spoke of Mr. Vassar's grief over "that cruel letter."²

Manifestly, the letter was severe, a heated attack on his supposed enemies in the Board, but meant only to put the friends of the college on their guard in considering its interests at the approaching meeting. It is to be remembered that it was in the hands of six active and able Trustees when the subjects referred to came before the Board, — February 23, 1864.

The crucial question turned on the opening of the college in the fall. If that were decided on, the curriculum must be adopted now and the professors appointed. Jewett says, in his narrative, that M. Vassar, Jr., and Swift, and one other member of the Executive Committee argued against the opening with great earnest-

¹ In his letter of March 14.

² Jewett, March 17.

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ness.¹ A number of prominent members argued for it, alleging the expectations of the community and the ability of the committee to have the college in readiness. He took no part in the debate, and Mr. Vassar expressed his willingness to leave the decision to the Board. "On taking the question all the Trustees voted in favor of the opening in September excepting the gentlemen above named and Dr. Babcock."²

In essentials this is correct, but calls for modification. The founder, while anxious to have the college opened as soon as possible, for every personal reason invoked caution and care. He wrote Dr. Anderson, January 19, expressing grave doubts, for financial and

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 138.

² *Ibid.*, p. 139. Dr. Babcock was an able, prominent clergyman, at this time resident in Poughkeepsie, and a charter member of the Board. That he and Jewett were separating in their views as early as May, 1863, the founder's book of *Copies* (pp. 64-66) makes clear. He says it is not due to anything Babcock has done or left undone, but some one has aroused a prejudice in Jewett's mind, and he thinks time will work a cure. Later he tells Babcock that Jewett's "prejudices" are "candid and honest"; that the issue was really due to Babcock's wish to have a chair in the college (this is confirmed by Jewett's manuscript narrative), and to Jewett's determination that he should not.

other reasons.¹ His first desire was to have all ready and perfect. "Though no one of you can realize the extent of my deep solicitude," he says in what is perhaps the most important of all his "Communications" to the Board, "that I may be spared by my Heavenly Father to see the final and successful achievement of a life prolonged, *I still invoke deliberation and not haste.*"

The debate was a very general one, several resolutions being offered and defeated. At last, Dr. Robinson moved that the Executive Committee exert itself to complete the college for opening in September, and this was carried, leaving the result in doubt.² Thereupon the motion was carried that Dr. Jewett's educational plan be referred back to the Committee, which should report at the June meeting.³

One other event of that meeting deserves mention. Dr. Lossing urged an elaborate preamble and resolutions changing the title of the

¹ *Copies*, p. 84.

² Raymond (J. H.) thought it important to open the college in September, but changed his mind in May. All were relieved then and especially the founder. (*Life*, p. 517.)

³ Official minutes.

college by the omission of the word "female." Considering the later discussion and the founder's remarks favoring the change, the fact of the defeat of the resolution is particularly interesting.¹

This meeting was recognized by Jewett as a defeat. Could it have escaped his attention that, in referring to the genesis of his idea of a college, the founder had not mentioned him? For seven years, he says in his narrative, he had "maintained his ascendancy over Mr. Vassar" and had never proposed a measure that he did not adopt. His foes had determined to shake his hold and not to have the college opened with him as President, he wrote from memory in 1879. Mr. Jewett, they told the founder, wished to open it for his own glorification, and after the opening Mr. Vassar would be "a mere no-body." "For the first time" he could not bring the founder to his

¹ The founder had still defended the word "female" on November 6, 1863 (*Copies*, p. 71), but in April, 1864 (*Ibid.*, p. 96), says to Mrs. Hale that when the time comes to donate a further sum he will make the change a condition of his gift! Mr. Vassar writes Mrs. Hale, February 26, 1864, that Bishop, Anderson, John Raymond, were adverse, and he suspects Jewett's zeal for the change.

view.¹ Possibly he exaggerated the spirit of the opposition, and possibly underestimated the difficulties before the Executive Committee; but Charles A. Raymond's letters show the growing enmity, and M. Vassar, Jr.'s, diary proves the animus of the nephew's antagonism. The forces had gathered for Jewett's destruction. Prudence, caution, tact might have saved him, even then, but the powder was ready for the spark, and the spark fell. "Now," says the manuscript narrative, "occurred one of those unaccountable incidents which Providence sometimes employs to shape our lives and control our destinies."

As Jewett tells the tale, Dr. Hague (he leaves the name in blank), "one of the leading Trustees," told Mr. Swan that he would like to write a letter, whereupon Swan invited him to his office and gave him the materials. When Dr. Hague left his office, Swan returned and observed two or three sheets of paper lying on the table, and saw they were in the President's familiar hand. He reads the letter, addressed to Dr. Hague. "This was enough!" "Mr.

¹ Manuscript narrative, pp. 137-39.

Swan, thinking the letter was left in his office for a purpose, and fearing he would be compromised by silence, showed it to Mr. Vassar." His enemies, he adds with mild truth, "now felt that they had in their hands the means of crushing the President." They pointed out, he says, to the founder, how unworthy Jewett had shown himself of his kindness and confidence, his disrespect and even contempt for him, his effort to influence the Trustees in advance against the founder's wishes regarding the opening, his assumption of dictatorship, and his treatment of the founder as a feeble old man in his second childhood. The founder must insist on his resignation.¹

It should be said at once that though Dr. Jewett at first suspected, as others did, including Mr. Swan, that the dropping of the letter was a "betrayal," and part of a "plot,"² he changed his view. "Subsequent inquiry convinced Mr. Swan that he was mistaken, and the positive assurance of Dr. — himself satisfied me that the matter was purely accidental." That perhaps cannot be said of the

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 140. ² Letter of March 8, 1864.

reading of the letter by Mr. Swan. Mr. Jewett, however, finds "the grand mistake . . . when I put on paper words so uncomplimentary to Mr. Vassar."¹

But was there a "plot," as was thought by some? There is no reason to assume such an unnecessary event. There was opposition to Mr. Jewett by the nephews, from the start, and naturally enough by several others, friends or counselors of theirs. Charles A. Raymond's letters show the bitterness of his opposition, and one cannot think that he expressed it only to Mr. Vassar and Mr. Swan. Probably Mr. Jewett had come to assume, with some justice, that *he* himself represented the founder's views. We have already noted sundry adverse expressions, even from Bishop, and "young Matt's" diary discloses deep opposition to Jewett himself. Probably the founder was growing restless under Jewett's influence, — and it is not in the least unlikely that he was at times "vacillating." Not even "founders" are infallible, and they have been known to be "difficult." Doubtless Mr. Jewett had met

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 148.

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enough to ruffle his spirit, and to make him “sick at heart,” and his manuscript, in 1879, is far calmer than the few letters we have from 1864.

It is difficult to trace in detail the events of the next few days. How soon did the letter become known to the “enemies”? An entry in the diary of M. Vassar, Jr., — which seems to omit the meeting of February 23, — states that the Executive Committee met on February 29, and passed a resolution “for progressg with college and purchase furniture and other matters particularly of the Hypocracy and unfair acts of Presdt Jewitt — his intrigue, cunning, Jesuitical proceedings against M. V. and others — his would be one man power— which is showing itself time will prove his evil attempts.” March 1, he writes again, “engagd at collge office this A.M. with committee on matters pertaining to business of M. V. connection with Jewitt — the latter evil attempts to injure Comtte as also the Founder.” We may accept this as a clear reference to the “dropped letter,” and a conference as to the proper policy to be pursued.

On March 2 Mr. Vassar wrote Jewett that he had before him a letter in his handwriting and signed by him, from which he quoted extracts. No further confidence was possible between them and he asked for his resignation without delay. All further communications must be in writing.¹ Jewett was away a week, and found this letter on his return. He answered it kindly and tenderly, reviewing all their relations, but saying that the resignation was a matter for consideration in the light of his own reputation as well as of the interests of the college. He writes Bishop that he proposes to go on doing his duty, and if his resignation is insisted on to present all the facts to the Board, from the beginning, and leave the decision to the Trustees. He asks Bishop's advice, suggests that he show the letter to Lathrop and Raymond (J. H.), and then burn it. Or would it be better limited to Bishop himself?² Jewett says in his narrative that he laid the subject before several resident trustees, and they protested against his resignation and

¹ Letter from Jewett to Bishop, March 8.

² Letter, March 8.

denied the right of the founder to "sacrifice the President to the enmity of his heirs and their allies or to his own wounded self-love. The majority would vote against the resignation and would support him." He adds that William Kelly "urged this view" and "engaged to induce Mr. Vassar to accept a proper explanation" from Jewett. "In this, as I afterwards too tardily learned, he was successful," he says, but we shall have reason to modify this view as we follow the contemporary letters. Jewett adds the story that some months later "a gentleman present" told him that Mr. Vassar wrote a note accepting his apology and asking him to call; that Matthew, Jr., saw it and threw it into the fire, saying there should be no reconciliation and that Mr. Jewett should resign.¹ This also must be read in the light of the letters, and Jewett did not know it at the time. As he received no note, he tells us, he concluded that Mr. Kelly had failed in his mission, and as he could not work without the founder's full confidence, he must resign. But on what terms? He rehearses his reflections on

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 142.

the financial losses he had suffered through these years, and his probable power to recover a good sum before his resignation. And he recalls that the New York law protects a President from removal without full cause, and that he might reëstablish himself in Mr. Vassar's esteem. On the other hand, his success now against "the formidable combination" was doubtful, especially in view of the attitude of the Executive Committee, and the result might be disaster and disgrace. The college might be delayed, Mr. Vassar "wearied and disgusted," and the whole scheme rendered abortive. That weighed most with him, the interest of a work to which he had given so many years. He would resign unconditionally, assigning no reason, and the public should never know that there had been trouble "between the projector and the founder of the college."

"Influenced by these considerations, on April 16, 1864, I placed my resignation in the hands of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees." The letter is a model of courteous feeling, without a reflection of the bitterness

of spirit out of which it had come, and is worthy of a gentleman, and one who had given his best to a new and noble work. The steps which preceded it, however, call for some review.

Dr. Bishop replied to Jewett's letter of the 8th of March on the 14th, and saved a copy, which the college has. He says Jewett was not "betrayed": the letter was *lost*. He advises that either he must pay no attention to Mr. Vassar's letter, or resign, and his course must be determined by his own feelings. He would better resign for the sake of putting "himself before the Trustees and public in the most gentlemanly attitude." If the Trustees refused to accept his resignation, his position would be improved; and if it were accepted, his place before the world would be more dignified than if he were *forced* to resign. The "lost paper" has undoubtedly seriously damaged his stand with the Board, says "*Fidus Achates*."

At this point we note once more the influence of Charles A. Raymond. On the 7th of March he is asking Swan for news of the great meeting. He has been busy at Fort Monroe

planning for the education of Negroes and whites, with General Butler's favor. March 14, the day of Bishop's letter to Jewett, he has heard confidentially from Swan, but does not wholly understand the disposition of the "plan." He would drop Jewett. His leaving would do the college good. Let Mr. Vassar frame a letter which he can publish, calling for a reorganization along lines *he* approves. Raymond will act for him if he wishes it, — and he suggests details of a business organization. He rejoices that the "*Autocracy* is ended," but evidently he does not yet know fully the existing conditions. He sketches a long letter on March 16, as a model for Mr. Vassar to send. He is not himself sure that *he* can undertake the task, but *might* get leave of absence.

Jewett answers Bishop on March 17. He honors and loves him for his strong advice. He has seen Mr. Kelly, the chairman of the Board, shown him Mr. Vassar's letter, and Jewett's reply, and told him the history of his troubles from 1860 on. Kelly had expressed his sympathy, though he had condemned the

famous letter sharply. He had seen Mr. Vassar, who "grieved deeply over that cruel letter," but yet had kindly feelings for Jewett. Kelly had shown him that he could not have had any motive but for the good of the college and intended no reflection on the founder, and had urged Mr. Vassar to allow Jewett to call in person and apologize. That interview had been had, and "all is right." "Mr. Vassar apologized for alluding to my resignation, having done so under excitement," and he promised "to forgive and forget." Hereafter, he (Jewett) will keep to his duties as President and on the Committee on faculty. He has learned a lesson! "Of the 'accident,'" he adds, "or on the course of the man who put the letter into Mr. Vassar's hands, the writer of so indiscreet a letter has no right to comment."

Jewett's view of the case was too roseate. Mr. Vassar never gave him his confidence again and affirms that Jewett misunderstood his politeness. His letter to Mr. Kelly should be read in full, as showing his point of view, and in justice to his poise, his wisdom, and his

firmness of character.¹ The letter is as follows:—

POUGHKEEPSIE, March 24, 1864.

HON. WILLIAM KELLY,

MY DEAR SIR: — The very friendly tone of your letter to me of the 21st instant (which would have received an earlier notice but for my feeble health) justifies the entire confidence I have in your judgment and your interest in myself and all that concerns our College. From you I have nothing whatever to conceal. I am gratified at your approval of my conduct in this emergency with Mr. Jewett and I have the utmost hope, that I shall do nothing that may not meet the approval of every good man. But your letter embarrasses me, since it leads me to believe you are not fairly apprised of the result of the late interview between myself and Mr. Jewett. I, of course treated him politely as my own self-respect required me to do, but nothing occurred to justify any hope or expression on his part that our relations were to be hereafter different than those indicated in my letter to him on the 2d instant which I read to you, — upon receiving

¹ In November, 1888, the late President Backus, of the Packer Institute, sent to the writer a copy of this letter, made from the original in Mr. Wight's collection. He had suggested to Mr. Wight that the original should be given to Vassar College, but he had concluded to allow a copy only to be sent for the archives. The original letter later came to the college. Dr. Backus thought that Dr. Jewett's view of the attitude of the founder, as expressed personally to him, seemed inconsistent with the statements of the letter.

your letter, I have written him again to this effect, so that he may be under no mis-apprehension. Indeed I cannot conceive how it was possible for him so far to have misunderstood me for I have not and cannot give him again "the possession of my friendly confidence." He cannot have derived that idea from any thing that has passed between us for nothing has in any way justified it. I cannot again feel safe in his hands or receiving him alone if such representations are to follow our interviews.

I beg you my dear Sir to look at my position. I have given the results of my life to this College — a very toilsome long and anxious life. I have hoped to do a good thing and indeed a great one. I have given it every effort and every thought of my later years unweariedly. It excludes every other interest and every other occupation. My confidence has been most assiduously sought for years past by Prof. Jewett and has been obtained to an unlimited extent. I have allowed his importunities at times to forestall my own judgment, so that I have been willing to yield my personal preferences and ideas to advance my undertaking. But one concession has only demanded another and another until my confidence has been made to waver and I have struggled with the doubts raised upon his conduct whether he were equal to the position he has sought and obtained at my hands. It is with extreme regret that I am compelled to admit that I have not obtained from him practically that assistance or that counsel which has assured my own mind

as to the clearness of his judgment or his power to organize and control this immense interest, and these doubts Sir, have been my own. My wishes and my prejudices have all the time been thrown strongly in his favor hoping continually that he might eventually be able to remove them and justify my expectations and what the College absolutely requires. Prof. Jewett has been always entirely mistaken as to the extent or violence of any prejudice upon the part of any members of the Ex. Com. against him so far as I am able to judge. It is impossible that there should have been this hostility to him or to the enterprise which he has without its coming to my knowledge. You may depend upon it they are unreal — at all events up to a very late period and even now they do not take any shape beyond what must be the natural consequences of Prof. Jewett's own conduct and expressions. Under these circumstances what can I do that I have not done. I am laboring exhaustingly for this College. I cannot and do not propose to compel Prof. Jewett to resign his place but I must rid myself of all responsibilities and throw it wholly upon the Trustees. We must have the ablest man to be found at its head and in order to ensure its success. If the Trustees can find in Mr. Jewett's conduct or in any thing he has so far done *anything*, sufficient guarantee that he is the man, I can be silent. So far as he has affronted me in my person I do not wish that to weigh against the College. I can endure anything almost if my College may

succeed. If his sincerity, discretion, foresight, if his mental and moral power as a controller of other minds and leader in an undeveloped path, recommend him beyond any other man he must remain the President, — It would have been an infinite relief to me to have found him equal to the confidence I have given him personally. It would have been my most exalted personal pleasure to have had a President to whom I could open my whole heart and on whom I could most positively rely. It is far better that I should fail in all that if that man whoever he may be may be able to win and preserve the confidence of my Trustees and of the great public at large — a well balanced mind, able and manly man — a man above all intrigue — above selfishness, — above jealousy. Reliant upon his open conduct of affairs for his position in office and in the world which must judge him.

I have thus fairly expressed every feeling and desire I harbor — although I fear at the expense of your patience. But I cannot nor do ask your personal favor or friendship to me to control your conduct, but I do anxiously ask you to give this subject your full reflection and that you judge and act as if the Presidential chair were vacant and President Jewett, if you please, and any other best man who you know were in the canvass for that place, — who of all the men you know would or should receive your endorsement, Mr. Jewett or any other person.

Please to excuse this long letter. I several times stopped to make it shorter but could not.

Yrs. most Respectfully etc. etc.

M. VASSAR.¹

Meanwhile the other influences were not quiet. Raymond (C. A.) is still prodding Swan, and in a letter of April 3 includes one to Mr. Vassar, dated April 4, to be handed to him if Mr. Swan finds it "judicious." Whether he deemed it so we cannot tell; but it is to be noted that it was written after Jewett's trouble with Mr. Vassar, but before his resignation was published. The *vice-presidency* is still in his view. He would now have matters above-board. He offers himself as a "professional

¹ In a letter to Mrs. Hale, May 19, 1864, the founder tells her that he is glad Jewett had told of his resignation, as it saved him from the painful duty, and he might have been led to say more in justifying himself than he should. He can forgive, "altho' I cannot forget." "An intercepted" letter (the quotation marks are his) "disclosed his future views and purposes toward me and my associates" — but all is clear now. J. H. Raymond has been appointed and he hopes he will accept. Mr. Vassar had written Mrs. Hale in March (23d; he demanded the resignation on the 24th) that Jewett's opposition to his view that every chair should be filled by women if possible, "with some other matters (which I may not trouble you with), may possibly lead to the selection of some other person to fill that chair." (*Copies*, p. 93.)

expert" to carry out Mr. Vassar's principles. He has done all he can as a simple friend. Jewett is incompetent. Let him be removed. Raymond does not wish the place, but if he can get three months' leave and his salary, he will *give* his services. No man can carry out his plan but himself. If Mr. Vassar does not find a man (who must carry out *his own* plan), he knows that he can rely on Raymond. He tells Swan there is no other way "if they wish another President" "but to inaugurate the Vice Presidency;"¹ "and which position I would much prefer to being Prest. if I was to have a position of my choice." Mr. Swan has told him, evidently, that the Trustees are reluctant to remove Jewett, as Mr. Vassar's own choice, and he urges that Mr. Vassar shall say the word (Mr. Swan, of course, knew then that the resignation had been asked, but did not care to share the information with this "outsider"). He goes further, again details his plans for the schools, and meets the objections Mr. Swan reports (April 8), and skillfully sympathizes with him in the lack of apprecia-

¹ Letter, April 4, 1864.

tion shown him in his pecuniary returns from the founder and the trustees.

M. Vassar, Jr., also records,¹ "called on Mr. Sheldon, N. Y. and talked over college affairs, the acts of Jewitt and his deception and Hypocrisy and unfitness for office all of which is fully known by the Board and now seen as has also been seen heretofore."

April 23, Jewett writes Bishop that he has forwarded his resignation April 16, and "not had one moment of despondency or dejection." He knows the step is necessary to save the college from death or paralysis. But if the Board should care to pass any kind expressions he does not wish — "or any of his clique" — "to have a hand in preparing it." He does not wish to be killed by a chaplet of poisonous flowers! He then adds a few points for the good of the college. He had named John H. Raymond as his successor when he went to Europe. He is more than ever persuaded that he is the man. He would now have a report from the Committee on Faculty and Studies that could be embraced in an advertising cir-

¹ Diary, April 5, 1864.

cular. He would at once elect professors and teachers, and name a committee on furnishing, and open in the fall of 1864 if possible.

Though not communicated to the Board till the 29th, this fact was known to Matthew, Jr., on the 20th. "Pres Jewitt has tendered resignation as Prest V. F. College—it has come to the same thgh the request of N. York members of the Board Directors his attack by letter agnst M. V. & Ex Committee has been the result."

Charles A. Raymond has heard of the crisis by April 24, and expresses to Swan his sympathy with Mr. Vassar who knows the unselfishness of his (Raymond's) work and thought for him. Now it would be a sacrifice for him to take the place so full of difficulty, but he would if Mr. Vassar wished it. April 27, he has received *advanced* knowledge from Swan and does not doubt that his "namesake" "will be a great advance on Mr. Jewett." He sends him his congratulations and commiserates Mr. Vassar, "the good poor man," "sadly worn out and perplexed." Later, May 12, he allows Swan to use anything he has written and offers his assistance to the new President. He is

happy in the prospect of the return of his property by the Government.

The official minutes of the Trustees show that a request for a special meeting was preferred by Mr. Vassar, M. Vassar, Jr., Nathan Bishop, Mr. Swan, Mr. Swift, Mr. Buckingham, and Mr. Dubois. The meeting was called for April 29, the resignation was presented, and unanimously accepted.

Mr. Lossing presented appreciative resolutions which were also unanimously adopted. Dr. Jewett has the impression¹ that Matthew, Jr., objected to fuller resolutions offered by Dr. Lossing, and "a substitute was prepared couched in the most general terms and meaning nothing"; but no hint of this appears in the minutes. The resolutions as passed are as follows:—

On motion of Mr. Swift, seconded by Mr. Bishop, it was unanimously resolved that the resignation of Dr. Jewett as President of this College be accepted.

On motion of Mr. Thompson the resignation of Dr. Jewett as Trustee of this College was unanimously accepted.

¹ Manuscript narrative, p. 147.

186 BEFORE VASSAR OPENED

On motion of Mr. Lossing the following resolutions were adopted unanimously:

Whereas Milo P. Jewett, LL.D., has resigned his office as President of Vassar College, and his resignation having been accepted, therefore,

Resolved: that the Board of Trustees entertain a high appreciation of the industry, zeal and energy which President Jewett has uniformly evinced in the discharge of his duties while connected with this college.

Resolved: that on leaving his place of active co-operation with us in the great work of female education he carries with him our cordial good wishes for his happiness and prosperity.

Resolved: that the secretary is hereby directed to present to Dr. Jewett copies of these resolutions with the corporate seal of the College attached.¹

¹ From the Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees, April 29, 1864. At the meeting of the Board of Trustees in June, 1882, Dr. Lossing called the attention of the Board to the death of Rev. Milo P. Jewett, D.D., first President of Vassar College, and offered the following resolution: "Whereas, information has come of the death at Milwaukee in the seventy-fourth year of his age of Rev. Milo P. Jewett, an original trustee and the first chosen President of Vassar College, and whereas, the labors of Dr. Jewett in the business of promoting the higher education of woman were earnest, incessant, and highly successful during a period of almost a quarter of a century, and whereas, Dr. Jewett was one of the chief helpers of the Founder of Vassar College in maturing a plan of the institution and in carrying the enterprise to a successful conclusion, resolved, that we the Board of Trustees of Vassar College do hold the memory of Dr. Jewett in profound respect because

Dr. John H. Raymond, a Trustee who had proved himself useful in the organization,¹ principal of the "Brooklyn Polytechnic," had already been selected by the Committee and was unanimously elected President at this meeting. Matthew, Jr., records, on this day, April 29, "Meeting this day Board Trustees of Vassar F. College to accept resignation of Milo P. Jewett as President, was accepted unanimously as also Trustee of the same — after some other business board adjourned to meet in June." No word of the new election! Nor does the founder refer to Jewett in his address at the June meeting! So Jewett passes from the history. He says that this sudden termination of his connection surprised his friends, but he gave vague answers and general explanations and allowed nothing to get into print. He rested for three years, to reëstablish his health, and moved to Milwaukee in 1867, where he exercised much influence in education of his useful work and his many virtues, and do tender our heartfelt sympathies in their bereavement to his family and friends of education; resolved, that the Secretary be, and hereby is, instructed to transmit to the family of the deceased an attested copy of the above preambled resolution."

¹ Cf. *Life*, p. 518.

tional and religious work till his death in 1882. Only once do we know of his crossing the track of Vassar's history again. In 1873 he wrote Dr. Raymond,¹ expressing his admiration of the report on Vassar for the Vienna Exposition and his approval of Dr. Raymond's views. He sympathizes with him in the embarrassments and vexations through which he has reached the "goal," and "achieved a triumph." He is happy in "the humble part he was permitted to bear in laying the foundations and building the rough scaffolding of the grand temple. I never could have overcome the obstacles you have vanquished in rearing the superstructure. Being advised of these from year to year, I have long been persuaded that it was best for myself, as well as for the college, that I left in 1864"; he has not been East, and hopes in another year to revisit the college.

What must be our final judgment of Dr. Jewett's influence and of his plans for the college? And what of the charges made by him and against him?

It seems plain, from the narrative here given,

¹ *Life*, pp. 621, 622.

that the idea actually embodied in the college was due to the suggestion and the nurture of Dr. Jewett. Every allowance must be made for the weight of Mr. Vassar's own statements, already quoted, as to the influence of Lydia Booth. Possibly she had some dim scheme of a college in mind, or perhaps she thought of some endowed seminary as contrasted with the small school of which she was principal. No one has quoted from her a letter or an authentic word which can sustain more than this, and there is nothing to show that Mr. Vassar had any view of the education of girls above the ordinary, when he met Mr. Jewett. His first quoted statement shows nothing more than that he was interested in "female education" through her influence, unless we take as literal the final words regarding "an institution like the one we now propose." But that was written in 1864, after nine years of discussion with Dr. Jewett; and in the early years of the period we know, from the contemporary papers preserved by Dr. Jewett, that Mr. Vassar was asking for details of a novel suggestion. Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact

that when Jewett's influence had waned and the feeling against him was taking shape, it was natural for Mr. Vassar to lose sight of his early indebtedness to him and to look back to his earlier associations with his niece. In the statement of 1866 he says expressly that the business intercourse with his niece (he owned her building) accounted for his early interest in the enlarged education of women and the drift of his later conversation and correspondence. He does not mention Jewett, but we know that Jewett was the man who wrote the letters and deposited the answers with Vassar. As has been said, also, whatever he had thought regarding education, Mr. Vassar had definitely settled on a hospital, and had made his will accordingly, before Mr. Jewett opened his scheme to him.

Dr. Alonzo K. Parker, Recorder of the University of Chicago, formerly resident in Poughkeepsie, and accustomed to hear M. Vassar, Jr., and his father discuss all matters of interest to the family, says that one form of Mr. Vassar's earlier idea was a scheme for indigent females. The pupils were to learn to wash and

sew and cook, and do housework. This he thinks preceded Dr. Jewett's coming, and it was probably one of the many projects that in turn appealed to this rich man who would spend his money wisely for posterity. But Dr. Jewett was a man of experience in colleges and schools, and he saw now a great opportunity. His thought was not of a great *school*, as Charles Raymond derisively said, but of a large *college*, equipped far better and more fully endowed than any but the largest and best of our contemporary American colleges. He had the vision of a distinguished and able faculty, of endowments, of abundant apparatus, a large library, a museum, an art gallery, a building supplying comforts unknown in the institutions of the day, and surrounded by a park attractive to the eye and inviting to exercise. His early papers form a remarkable ideal for the epoch before 1860, and Jewett was right in his claim that no such institution existed. His plan promised far more for a girl than even Oberlin could offer, or than the Southern colleges had dreamed of. It was a *development*, but it was *new*, and it prophesied

a new day for woman, whether in coeducational or separate colleges.

The founder, shrewd, able, intelligent, and aspiring, quickly grasped the ideal, though often in a limited way, and gradually worked out his views broadly and soundly under Dr. Jewett's constant teaching. Why should it be thought needful for his honor that the claim be made that a self-educated man, who had never had any occasion to study an educational problem, should of his own notion have struck out an idea which was to mark an epoch in the history of college education and in the development of woman?

It may be asked, at this point, if Mrs. Vassar herself had been an influence contributory to an educational interest. Inquiry among surviving relatives entirely negatives any such suggestion. She had no interest whatever in her husband's new scheme, though she survived till it was well advanced.¹ She was careful of her home and devoted solely to it, a precise and economical housekeeper without any wider interests, and somewhat eccentric, in the view of her neighbors.

¹ The beginning of 1863.

The founder's view of his debt to Dr. Jewett must not be inferred from the letter which followed Jewett's "cruel" references to him, nor from his omission of all later mention of him. We must recall the letter of Thanksgiving Day of 1860,¹ his acknowledgment "from the very depths of his heart" of "his sincere and ingenuous friendship" and his references to the "Great Enterprise." Indeed, the founder's remarkable letter to Mr. Kelly is itself the frank statement, even in the hour of withdrawing his confidence from Jewett, that he had had it "to an unlimited extent," and though he regrets that he must now admit that Jewett has not been the reliance that he had expected, he makes it plain that he had fully trusted him and depended on him. He minimizes, too, the influences which have proved steadily antagonistic to Jewett and have attempted to undermine his influence on the founder, asserting that Mr. Jewett has been entirely mistaken as to the extent or violence of the prejudice of members of the Executive Committee against him. This could not have been, without his

¹ See *ante*, p. 118.

knowledge, he asserts. Indeed, it is extremely likely that Dr. Jewett did exaggerate the degree of this feeling against him, — and he was apparently given to strong expression of his feelings. Nevertheless, we know how virulent were the expressions in the diary of M. Vassar, Jr.; we know that Charles Raymond had talked and written constantly for two years, to the founder and to Mr. Swan, letters intended to undermine all faith in the ability or the goodness, even, of Dr. Jewett. We know that as far back as 1860 Mr. Vassar wrote Jewett that the “great enterprise” had cost him the friendship of many, even of “some of the family friends because of what I am doing.” It is not likely that this feeling omitted as its object the recognized cause of the novel plan. Nor can we forget the effort to divert at least a part of Mr. Vassar’s interest to other projects and his anger when he saw what was implied in it as to the founding of the college. These facts were all known to Jewett, and he knew too well that these influences exerted themselves, directly and indirectly, on the founder. It is not strange that the irritation

grew with the years until, as Jewett wrote Nathan Bishop, he was sick in body, mind, and heart. And that was his undoing.

That he was wrong, hopelessly wrong, in his unseemly reflections on the founder, and that the latter was cruelly hurt, there can be no question. The assumption that Mr. Vassar was perfect is not essential to prove that. We are far enough away from the event to recognize, without unfitting reflections on the man, that a degree of uncertainty and vacillation might have been expected amid the difficulties involved in his great plan, especially for one unused to the annoying details of an educational organization. Dr. Brackett, once Mr. Vassar's pastor, wrote in 1880 to Jewett, commending his manuscript narrative in general, but advising him against occasional harsh expressions regarding the founder and others. They are, indeed, singularly few, considering what Jewett thought his provocation. Dr. Brackett tells him the founder has been canonized, and while freely acknowledging the very faults Jewett has specified, bids him "deal more gently with our idol." He would tell only

so much unpleasant truth as is needful for a righteous cause. And that, indeed, is enough! Mr. Vassar needs no false apology. He had the defects of character which might have been expected in a hard-working man who had slowly raised himself from poverty to great wealth, but he grasped a great idea and it elevated him, developed him, exalted his qualities, and sanctified him. None the less was it true, that in those days of progress his companion found many a day of difficulty and failures and seeming wreck of the great plan. Mr. Vassar was truly great because he welcomed and used a great idea, but he was not devoid of greatness who could inspire him with it, and hold his confidence through the developments of nine active years.

Nor did Mr. Jewett's criticism destroy his affection for Mr. Vassar nor his admiration of his sterling qualities. Early in this history we found him making a similar criticism, in a private letter,¹ but it had not destroyed his esteem for him, — and in all the later writing of Jewett there is no trace of bitterness. He

¹ See *ante*, p. 161.

thought, indeed, that Mr. Kelly had reconciled Mr. Vassar to him, and the founder says he was mistaken in this; but Jewett's letter is of the same approximate date, and if there was misunderstanding, both may have been at fault.

Jewett was enthusiastic, sanguine, full of gentleness and pity, but in those days, we fancy, blazing into wrath under provocation, roseate in his views, seeing matters somewhat as he wished to, free in his expressions, not over-cautious. But his work was set above himself, if one can trust his testimony and the story of his life. He impressed Dr. Parker as a man of ideas, sagacious, capable. Dr. Nathan Wood, closely related to him in Milwaukee and intimately knowing his life and spirit, characterizes him as "one of the most refined and cultivated Christian gentlemen whom I have ever known," and says, "I have never met his equal for the utter charm of his felicitous English speech in private conversation." He never spoke "in malice or heat" regarding his opponents: "his spirit was catholic, genial, kindly, Christian." Nothing he ever knew of

him could suggest his weakness in writing the fatal letter, so admirable was his poise, so equable his temper. Dr. Wood could not have accepted the fact but for Jewett's own statement. "He must have been tried beyond endurance. He was surely the ideal gentleman."¹

Milo P. Jewett deserves the credit of originating in Mr. Vassar's mind the impulse and conviction which resulted in Vassar College. He not only nurtured the seed, — he planted it. He wrote out the descriptions of what a college should be for Mr. Vassar's quiet reading, met his shrewd objections, encouraged his liberal views of woman's powers and opportunities, led him to make his will founding the college, then encouraged and vivified Mr. Vassar's earlier purpose to realize his aims in his lifetime, sketched plans with him of buildings, grounds, equipment, curriculum, urged him to form his board of trustees, and then, a culminating stroke, induced him to place the funds in its hands. Only those who knew Mr.

¹ Letter, November 25, 1912. Cf. also Memorial Volume, — funeral addresses, etc.

Vassar well, and knew of the long struggle of acquisition, could understand the cost of that decision and action to the founder. It was described to the writer by Mr. Swan, — and it was an heroic action.

When Mr. Jewett resigned, then, the idea had become thus far real: A board of trustees of able men had been gathered: Hon. William Kelly, master of the famous estate of Ellerslie, formerly State Senator, was chairman; Ira Harris, United States Senator from New York; James Harper, the publisher; Anderson and Robinson, of Rochester, distinguished educators; John H. Raymond, of the Brooklyn Polytechnic; well-known clergymen like Edward Lathrop and Dr. Magoon and William Hague; Nathan Bishop, Superintendent of Schools in both Providence and Boston, an LL.D. of Harvard, chairman of the Executive Committee of the famous Sanitary Commission; the historian Lossing; Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, — were among them. A farm of two hundred acres had been acquired, and through the years of the war an extraordinary building had been erected, said to have been

then the largest under a single roof in the entire land; another for a riding school and gymnasium, and another for an observatory; the next to the largest telescope in the country had been set up,¹ and apparatus purchased in considerable quantities; a creditable museum had been begun and an art gallery purchased by Mr. Vassar (announced in June) from Elias Magoon, at what was then the great price of \$20,-000;² a curriculum had been worked out, — a novel plan in the North; and nominations for several professorships were in the President's hands. All that had been achieved when Dr. Jewett proposed to the Board to open the college that fall of 1864, and he continued to believe that it might have been done. It was a great achievement for the three years of his presidency, nearly one of which was spent

¹ *Communications*, June 30, 1863.

² In September and October, 1864, Mr. Vassar writes Magoon very plainly about illustrations, engravings, etc., which Magoon is returning and offering now to sell to him! His letter of October 6 shows the character of the purchase he had made, in Magoon's "own language." The founder reminds him that the "*value*" of what he bought has "nothing to do with the question" — "the *quantity* has"; protests his trust and friendship, but insists on his rights. Cf. letter, October 10, 1864.

abroad. But the failure to carry his plan in February, 1864, was followed by the discovery of the fatal letter, and he resigned, after nominating as his successor John Howard Raymond, a member of the Board.

V

THE RECEPTION OF MATTHEW VASSAR'S PLAN

THAT there was no general interest in the college education of women, and that there was very little provision for it before Mr. Vassar announced his plan, has been made amply clear by our survey of the movement prior to 1860. The notion of a *real* college for girls, amply equipped, had scarcely found expression, and to most, Mr. Vassar seemed the originator of the work, the very first to grasp the fact that women were capable of the highest education and had an inherent right to it. Even to the few who were familiar with the pioneer movements, the breadth of his views and aims, and his willingness to give a fortune to make them realities, ranked him with the discoverers. But for that very reason it was inevitable that discussion of his plans should result in diversity of opinion, and that the novelty which threatened, if it did not secure, a change in the whole position of women, should find

expression in fear and criticism as well as praise.

That Mr. Vassar and Dr. Jewett anticipated criticism is evident from the letters we have, as is also their satisfaction at the general chorus of approval. The material at hand, however, is not as abundant as might be expected. The large correspondence with educators, at home and abroad, was probably destroyed with the founder's papers: at least it has not yet been found. Copies of a few letters are preserved in a manuscript volume prepared under Mr. Vassar's direction, and a few were kept because of their connection with some other specific business. Through the newspapers of 1860 and 1861, and later, occasional articles are found, but it was "war-time," and the interests of the Union absorbed men, and educational discussions were rarer than they would otherwise have been. Mr. Vassar himself kept a scrapbook, now in the college library, and many articles have thus been preserved, not always dated and sometimes even giving no indication of their source. From these, however, and from a few articles from maga-

zines, we may gain illustrations, if we follow them chronologically, of the sentiments of the public when the plan was announced, and as the building advanced and the college was made ready for the opening.

“Godey’s Lady’s Book” was a popular magazine of that early period and for many years enjoyed the editorial direction of Mrs. Sarah Jane Hale, whose interest in woman’s education and in Mr. Vassar’s scheme was intense, and to whom the college owed the suggestion that the word “female” be dropped from its title. Scattered through the numbers of this periodical, which dealt in an even-handed way with literature, education, questions of morals and religion, domestic economy, and the fashions of dress (amply illustrated with plates which have their value for the student of social life), are discussions of the specific demand of woman for a better education. Far back of this period, in 1839,¹ we are told of the great interest in America in the “education of females,” of the opening of the institution at Macon, Georgia, and in 1840²

¹ Vol. 19, p. 190.

² Vol. 20, p. 281.

we have a plea for woman's education. In 1855¹ we read of the many "colleges" poor in endowment and with scanty libraries, but notable as expressing a demand, and in 1856 (January) complaint is made that no public provision has been made for the higher education of girls, and Elmira is hailed² as about to open "on the largest and most generous scale." In 1860³ we read, "Scarcely a week passes without bringing us some cheering intelligence on this subject. . . . Among these last embryo institutions is that of Mr. Vassar, of Poughkeepsie, New York. We learn that he has determined to establish and endow an institution for the college education of young women. . . . The plan contemplates a course of study similar to that which is pursued in the leading colleges." On the same page is a reference to Willard Seminary, stating that no attention is yet given to household science, but the Mount St. Vincent (Roman Catholic) Seminary is soon to atone for the neglect of it.

Mr. Vassar wrote Mrs. Hale a letter regard-

¹ *Godey's Lady's Book*, vol. 50, p. 368.

² Vol. 52, p. 372. ³ Vol. 61, p. 368.

ing his aims, in May, 1860, and later Dr. Jewett himself furnished her with material.

By March 20 of 1860, it is evident that rumors enough were afloat, many of them unfounded, to call forth an authorized statement, for the Poughkeepsie "Telegraph"¹ publishes an account of Mr. Vassar's plans, by permission, for the sake of correcting misapprehensions and dissipating vague speculations, and the "Eagle" reprinted this (March 24) with high commendation and with the pious wish that the founder may live to see in successful operation "the pride and glory of Poughkeepsie, an honor to the Empire State and a blessing to our country and to the world, as it will be an enduring monument to his memory."²

It is of very particular interest to discover, at this very date (March, 1860) in a local paper, a reference to the very dramatic episode referred to in the earlier chapter which imperiled the foundations of Dr. Jewett's scheme. It recites the introduction into the Legislature of

¹ The article states that Mr. Vassar had submitted his views to prominent educators "something over three years ago."

² This is quoted also by Dr. Rufus Babcock in an article in the *Christian Watchman* of Boston.

bills to incorporate certain institutions in the city, schools for boys and girls, and a library, and states that "the movement then set on foot was premature." "We could not bring ourselves to believe that Mr. Vassar had abandoned the plans for an enterprise which had so long absorbed his purpose." That sounds like the voice of Jewett.¹

Doubtless views less favorable were expressed to the founder; but the records of them have for the most part disappeared. We have one reminder of such opinions in an extract from a letter of William Chambers, the distinguished Edinburgh publisher and philanthropist. He had been consulted as to the desirability of such an undertaking. Mr. Chambers replied that the proposal to endow an institution of a high class for board and education of several hundred young ladies filled him with astonishment and consternation. "I cannot imagine such a thing. Boarding-schools with but thirty girls are difficult to manage satisfactorily, and much above a hundred in a day academy is impracticable. It

¹ From the Scrapbook.

has been by exercising a marvelous degree of vigilance and discipline, such as you could not carry out among your high-spirited and highly dressed republican young ladies, that the Scottish Institution has been attended with success.” He recommends him to pause and consider whether he might not modify his benevolently conceived scheme, which he fears would never work to his satisfaction or be creditable to his good name. A safer investment, he thinks, would be a seminary for the blind, the deaf and dumb, or the weak in intellect!¹

On the day the bill for the charter was introduced (late in 1860) the “Times” (New York) published a communication² asking, “What do you think of a Woman’s College? And why not? After Allopathic, Homœopathic and Hydropathic and patent-pill colleges and universities, and all that sort of thing, why not let the girls have one? Sure enough, why not?

¹ Quoted in part from the founder’s book of copies, from his own letter to S. Austin Allibone, March 26, 1862, but in fuller detail from a note of the author’s made years since from an unremembered source. The letter was written in 1858.

² Scrapbook.

For the life of me, I do not discover any valid objection. But objection or no objection, the thing is to be." Then, after mentioning a few of the proposed trustees, the writer adds, "The said college is to have full power to educate feminines and grant them sheepskins." "Mr. Vassar is a famous brewer of Poughkeepsie. He has thrived and so wants to perpetuate his memory."

While action on the charter was pending, the "Post" (New York) tells of the purpose of the school. It is not to be an ordinary boarding-school, but to be "conducted with a view to convey solid instruction," and the article is a defense of this purpose. "How much ignorance is required in a woman to induce and sustain proper female delicacy, is a question that has never been answered." Her sphere is enlarging, and education must keep pace. Mary Lyon's exertions cannot be too highly honored, but more is required. There may be sex in mind, indeed, but who has decided what sciences and pursuits are proper for the female intellect? So the project receives high praise.¹

¹ Scrapbook.

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At the same time "Moore's Rural New York," a most influential weekly, sketches the plan. "We congratulate our female readers" on this equal opportunity. The article, which commends Mr. Vassar for doing this in his life-time, has much to say on the advantage of giving the *sons* of the rich or well-to-do a solid training, like the poor boy's, and the writer would put the daughters in a similar position and secure them against those direst foes to female happiness—professional fortune-hunters.¹

"Harper's Weekly"² also refers to the scheme before the Legislature and says, "the imbecile sneer at 'learned women' will sink into the proper contempt." Like Mr. Cooper, Mr. Vassar will see his plan develop as he intends, into nothing less than a university for women.³ On January 16, 1861,—the bill still pending,—the "World" (New York) commends the wisdom of the founder in carrying out his intentions and in concentrating his efforts by endowing one institution liberally. "We bid godspeed to Mr. Vassar in his great work and hail him as a wise and liberal bene-

¹ Scrapbook.

² January 7, 1861.

³ Scrapbook.

factor of our own and coming times." The college bids fair to stand alone in its liberal provisions and purpose, in contrast with the scanty endowments which compel the sacrifice of teachers in almost every institution.¹

On the 14th of January, 1861, the Senate passed the bill incorporating the college, and the Assembly followed on the 17th.² A letter written that day to the *Tuscola "Pioneer,"* of Vassar, Michigan, whose editor was especially interested in Poughkeepsie and in Mr. Vassar, throws an interesting light on a debate which preceded the final action. Mr. Kiernan had objected to the eighth section allowing Mr. Vassar to bestow any portion of his fortune on the institution, as in conflict with a law passed the previous year limiting such bequests, in ordinary conditions, to one half the estate.³ Mr. Pierce replied in a notable speech, with a full explanation of the scheme and the special circumstances leading to this provision, stating that there were no children and the near rela-

¹ Scrapbook. Copied also in *Telegraph*, January 22, 1861.

² *Eagle*, January 15 and 18; *Herald*, January 18.

³ Laws, 1860, chap. 360.

tives were already amply endowed, and pleading that "not one single college for the education of young women has yet been established in the United States." Mr. Kiernan withdrew his objection, and Mr. Rice, speaking for the Democracy, declared that, while they were disagreed as to the state of the Union, they could all unite in the interests of the youth of the Commonwealth.¹ Only by running through the columns of a metropolitan journal of that day, and noting the absorption of the Legislature and the people in the "state of the Union" can one appreciate the force of that utterance.²

Comments on the project are more numerous after this. The Albany "Evening Journal" publishes an article that was probably inspired by President Jewett. It is quoted at length in the "Eagle" of January 22, 1861, and tells who Mr. Vassar is, his connection with Thomas Guy, of Guy Hospital, his plan to do for women what Harvard and Yale do for men, outlines the scheme of education, and says the college

¹ Scrapbook.

² The charter was printed by the *Telegraph*, January 22. The *Herald's* comment has already been quoted (chapter on "Inception," etc., p. 121.)

is already under contract and is to cost \$180,-000, and is to have a library of 10,000 volumes; — its architects were, first, Tefft, and then, Renwick. It is not to be a *charity*. Mr. Vassar is eulogized, and his gift spoken of as the largest ever made in this country by a *living* man.

The New York "Tribune" discussed the project editorially,¹ pointing out the difficulties in the way of a girl's education and Mr. Vassar's practical handling of them: "A want which society has deeply felt and which was a reproach to our modern civilization is amply provided for." "It begins a new era for woman of which we have not the slightest doubt she will be sure to avail herself."²

The comments now are from widely scattered sections. From Kansas, then so far away, comes the laudation of the founder and his purpose;³ from Detroit the praise of the "magnificent charity";⁴ from Waltham, Massachusetts, a strong argument for the right of woman to education (signed, "T. J."); from Phila-

¹ January 28, 1861.

² Scrapbook. The *Telegraph* of January 29 gives well-chosen extracts.

³ Ellwood *Free Press*.

⁴ *Advertiser*.

adelphia an encomium on the gift and the wisdom of making it during the giver's life. "The object is a noble one," and it is hoped that "the proper bounds to female education" "will be fully studied," since "the minds of females are in many respects unlike those of men," and "it follows clearly from this that a different education is needed for each." But as yet there has not appeared "a philosophical treatise in which the kinds of instruction are deduced from the structure of the minds of women and the position to be filled by them in Society." Never has there been such an opportunity as this.¹

"Harper's Weekly" returns to the subject, in March (30th), and illustrates its article with a picture of the proposed building and another of Mr. Vassar presenting his funds to the Trustees. That first epochal meeting was noted in many papers, and the Boston "Journal" remarks it as the largest gift ever made by a living man, except Peter Cooper, and perhaps Peabody.²

¹ These all from the Scrapbook.

² The *Telegraph*, March 5; The *Press*, the *Eagle*, the *Chronicle* (March 7), the *Examiner*.

A variant on this general note appears in "Vanity Fair,"¹ a serio-comic treatment of the facts.²

VANITY FAIR wishes it to be distinctly understood, that in common with the other enormously advanced minds of the age, it offers its most pronounced thanks to MATTHEW VASSAR, of Poughkeepsie, for his noble conceptions of female ability and his lordly liberality, as manifested in founding what bids fair to be the best educational institute for the Muslin Sex in America.

When VANITY FAIR sees that amid all the motley millions who throng our wild ways, not above one man in a thousand who gets a full education, develops a truly Genial mind, or one in which Genius and Practical Activity are always aglow; and secondly, when it realizes that not one girl in a thousand gets such an education as the men in question — why then VANITY FAIR thinks it by no means wonderful that the Muslin Sex referred to should comparatively seldom show us those great and earnest creators in art — those SHAKESPEARES and RABELAISES, and RAPHAELS — who are not, by the way, any too frightfully common among those of the Cassimere Denomination.

We wish to see it fully and fairly tried — this experiment of giving to growing girl-minds good solid pabulum — good food of literature not expurgated into the mere moral broth of erudition

¹ February 15.

² Scrapbook.

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— substantial knowledge of old English classics, and with them those of Roman, Greek, Provençal, German, French and Italian days. With this condition, we would like to see taught the coæval history of men and of art — architecture, painting, music, and every expression of the Beautiful. Not forgetting the fact that Life is — or may be — a brave, strong, earnest career, full of great objects, glorious aims and not a mere husband-hunt, and endless house-keeping or “society”-ing.

This isn't, we know, Mr. VASSAR, exactly the programme laid down by most fashionable young lady school-keepers. But everything laid down in it, excellent Sir, (and much more with it, including healthy physical culture, and much practical art,) may be very sufficiently mastered during the same time now devoted to what is by excess of courtesy termed “an education.” Fact.

We are under the impression, Mr. VASSAR, that your institution will be a comprehensive and a progressive one, wherein great pains will be taken to give not only a solid but a liberal training in Science, Literature and Art. If this be indeed the case, we promise you that a future generation will place you miles in glory and in greatness above every Politician of the age — no matter who he may be, or what his confounded politics may have been.

The general trend of these articles is one of felicitation and hope. The scheme is “the

most magnificent tribute of honor to the cause of female education," and the Trustees are reminded of their responsibility to secure the best professors, to move cautiously, and to expend only the interest of their funds.¹ Hitherto it has been practically impossible for women to get the same educational advantages as men, but a new and more auspicious era has opened.² A New Haven man visits Poughkeepsie and writes to the "Palladium"³ an account of the college, quoting from the founder's address to the Trustees, on the assumption that "few of your readers have as yet heard of the institution." The "Country Gentleman"⁴ gives a cut of the building with its account of the proposed equipment of the college.⁵

The breaking of ground for the Main Building was a fresh occasion for such praise.⁶ Now the rival city of Newburgh says, through its "Weekly Times":⁷ "This indeed is a princely

¹ The *Chronicle*, New York.

² Milwaukee.

³ July 19.

⁴ June 25.

⁵ Encomium also in the *Boston Post*. These notices are from the Scrapbook.

⁶ The *Press*, June 5, 1861.

⁷ August 5.

gift devoted to the best of causes. . . . Poughkeepsie, already justly proud of her fine churches, good schools, and the Gregory House, sets an additional example, worthy of all commendation. Let not her rival sister be outdone in any respect." (!)

Now, too, the interest began to draw the citizens to note the progress of the building, and strangers come daily, — with wonder and astonishment at its extent, — and the local paper remarks that it must be a pleasant reflection to the generous founder that his munificence is giving employ to several hundred men in these hard times.¹

Evidently there was another side. Mr. Vassar remarks in August that public sentiment is improving; that though there were discouraging objections at first, now friends are numerous, and letters are coming daily "from both hemispheres" soliciting information.² Later, he says, Jewett reports "highest encomiums among the Literati."³

Meanwhile, Mrs. Hale was watching the

¹ The *Eagle*, September, 1861. ² Letter of August 31.

³ Letter of October.

situation keenly, and thrice recurs to the plan in "Godey's" of 1861.¹ Two colleges, she tells us, are now in prosperous operation, Wesleyan of Cincinnati, and Vassar, whose endowment will give it advantages no woman's college ever had. Its foundation is the cheering event of that year. Extracts from the founder's address are given. It is hoped to open the college in September, 1863. The course of study proposed is approved as especially fitted "to prepare pupils for the duties and labors which fall within the peculiar province of woman."

Thus the first year since the charter was granted was full of gratifying praise for the founder. "Education" had asked, through Professor Youmans, to publish his views, the press in general had extolled his motives and applauded his project, and he had received great numbers of commendatory letters.² He

¹ Vol. 63, pp. 172, 347.

² Among the few preserved is one from W. R. Bartlett, editor of the *Tuscola Pioneer*, already referred to, and one from Edward Morton, Jr., who inveighs in a rhapsodic paragraph against the exclusion of his sisters from his privileges at Harvard.

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so tells his Trustees in his address at their meeting in February, 1862. "During the past year we have the pleasure and satisfaction to receive very many letters from the most distinguished popular educators and others, of both sexes, in this country, bearing testimony to the noble enterprise of our undertaking, with the best wishes for its successful issue and patronage." Whatever objections and criticisms there were, were smothered, for him, under a general chorus of approval. Indeed, it was to be expected that the serious objections would come later with the actual work of the completed college.

That the full significance of the movement was not appreciated yet may be inferred from the article in Barnard's great "Journal of Education," in March, 1862.¹ It publishes a portrait of Mr. Vassar, but without marked appreciation or any evidence that the writer saw in his plan an event which marked an epoch.

A large correspondence continued during this year. We find letters from such men as

George W. Childs, Anthony Drexel, Coppee, Dreer, Allibone,¹ all cordial and approving. The founder writes, indeed, to the Honorable I. R. Ingersoll, of Philadelphia,² that some in this and foreign lands express doubt as to the success of the plan, chiefly because of its "unexampled magnitude"; but unlike Girard, he will be his own executor. Almost daily, he says, he is receiving letters from the Northern States, asking about the plan and date of opening. "We are quite a star in these calamitous times," he says with quiet pleasure.³

Of special mark this year is the article in the "Post" of New York, devoted to the founder's views and purposes. The "editors," we are told, had called on Mr. Vassar with this aim.

The most noteworthy contribution to the history of this second year is an article in the "New Englander," of October. Moses Coit Tyler was then a young, comparatively unknown clergyman, pastor of the Congrega-

¹ Volume of copied letters,—with a letter of the founder's, p. 37.

² March 29.

³ June. Letter Book, p. 40.

tional Church of Poughkeepsie. Profoundly interested in a movement in which he was destined to become a leader of influence, he wrote an article, without the knowledge of any individual among the Trustees, he tells us, on "Vassar Female College."

He is uncertain as to the result, but the act of Mr. Vassar is deserving of the highest praise. However, he cherishes hope for it and faith. Yet the venture is "on a sea not yet fully explored," and where some navigators have already gone down.

He describes the plant at length in somewhat rhetorical language, and adds that "Mr. Vassar has done his part and done it nobly, but *the important thing* yet remains."

He defines the needs of a college as distinct from the private enterprises and female institutes, etc. He sees the great call for endowment over and above anything that Mr. Vassar has thus far done: so much of it has gone into the building and grounds!

The "home principle," the housing of the girls as well as teaching them, the plan "to furnish them with beds as well as natural his-

tory cabinets, to do their washing and ironing as well as their astronomy and logic," he says has been provocative of much discussion, objection, and wit. He himself doubted, but has been converted. Professor Alpheus Crosby, in the "*Massachusetts Teacher*," September, 1861, comprehensively stated objections, speaking of the boarding-school or convent, of the scheme as worthless and needless, of the vexations, annoyances, expense, etc., involved.¹

¹ In the *Massachusetts Teacher* for August, 1861, the leading article is entitled, "Vassar Female College." The magazine was edited by a different man each month, and for this month the editor was Alpheus Crosby, the well-known Greek scholar, later professor at Dartmouth. The article gives Mr. Vassar's full statement to his trustees and Dr. Hague's reply, with an account of the funds and the plan so far as made. It regards "the establishment of an institution for higher female education on so liberal a plan and with so ample an endowment as an event of the greatest moment in that career of mental and social progress which forms the especial characteristic and glory of our age." Mr. Jewett, it is said, graduated from Dartmouth in 1828 "with excellent reputation as a scholar and a man"; "and has since been chiefly devoted to the promotion of female education. This united with his other qualifications gives an especial appropriateness to the appointment. We are happy to welcome him to so noble a field of labor." In the same magazine for September, 1861, there is an article on "University Education for Women," signed A. C., from the pen of Alpheus Crosby. It is a consideration of a "circular of questions" issued by "the newly elected President of Vassar Female College." It takes up these questions in detail, an-

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Mr. Tyler argues against the leaving of these girls to look up boarding-houses in the city, swering that as to aim and scope it would make it a university with advantages equal to those found in the best universities for men; as to faculty, it must now be made up of men and women, but will eventually consist probably wholly of women; as to the course of study, it answers that not years, but attainments should be the requirement. It would require Latin, but would make the other ancient languages elective. French should be required and the other modern languages offered. In other respects it follows in the main the general course of the colleges of the day, putting great emphasis, however, on the philosophy and art of education. "Let the college be in the best and true sense a Normal School." Domestic science, the art of conversation, and manners, are best taught at home, though much can be done in an institution. Dancing, it answers, should be encouraged; as to the education of day scholars, it expresses regret at the whole "*home scheme*," in the language here quoted. It urges a change on the part of the founder and the President and the other Trustees, saving the money for the educational work. If it is too late for this it would admit day scholars, "unless, as in some English institutions, the members are to keep their terms by *eating* and not by studying"; as to the preparatory department, if expedient, it hopes the college will soon outgrow it and so lift the standards of education. It wishes the institution the fullest success. "Shall not Massachusetts, too, have her university for women"? "Has she not her Vassar also" among her many liberal patrons of learning?

"We must confess that we regret that it is contemplated to provide a *home* for the students in the college edifice, and thus make of the institution a great boarding school or convent, involving in it the multitude of cares, expenses, annoyances, restraints, vexatious regulations, and evil influences, which are incident to the amassing of so many persons in one community under a single roof. On account of this provision, which, in

away from parental care, each according to her own preferences. He speaks also of the difficulty of getting to the buildings from the city. The economic argument is also urged, and the superior intellectual, social, and moral advantages. He points out the gains of one great community with common purposes, and refers to the experiences of Dr. Jewett and Mary Lyon with *day* pupils in their institutions, as pointing out the superiority of the advantages of residence pupils.

He pays a high tribute to Jewett, to his such an institution, judging from the university experience of England, Scotland, Germany, and this country, we deem to be usually worse than needless, the building and grounds at Poughkeepsie will cost, according to the statement of the trustees, about \$247,000, or more than one half of its magnificent endowment, leaving only about \$161,000 for all other purposes. If it is not now too late to make a change, we beg leave to suggest, most respectfully but earnestly, to the founder, president, and other trustees, whether it would not be better to erect, at a fourth part of the expense, a building, in some convenient situation, for the public rooms required: leaving the teachers and pupils to obtain houses and board for themselves, according to their own preferences, and thus doubling the sum appropriated for the intellectual endowment of the institution,—its library, apparatus, cabinets of natural history, art gallery, and other collections, and the foundation of professorships and scholarships." (The *Massachusetts Teacher*, September, 1861; quoted in the *New Englander*, vol. 21, p. 733.)

enthusiastic consecration, his experience, his fine culture, his executive power, his singular tact and suavity and knowledge of human nature, his industry and tenacity and large hospitality, and his high spiritual life.

The Board was greatly pleased with this discriminating and able article, and republished it for distribution. It also sent to Mr. Tyler, as evidence of its appreciation, a substantial honorarium.

The article brought out criticism, even if it remained unprinted. In the letters of Charles A. Raymond to Mr. Vassar and to Mr. Swan, we find strong objections to Mr. Tyler's point of view. He regards as "chimerical" and "transcendental" the idea that young women will go to college for four years as young men do. Where would they prepare? They must enter at thirteen or fourteen and graduate at nineteen or twenty. No other way is possible. He advocates their education because they govern us through their sensibilities. Every imitation of colleges for men is unsuitable. He praises the tone and spirit of Mr. Tyler's article, and its good taste. But *his* conception of

girls as distinguished from boys is very old-fashioned and very sentimental. A college cannot hold them after nineteen unless they are bound to be old maids and professional teachers. "This is the practical plain truth." "The idea of a college such as Tyler alludes to is so intangible that I suppose he could not help the intimation that it might fail."

By 1863, the plan had become more familiar and called forth less comment, but a few statements are preserved that are of interest. The Boston "Daily Advertiser," for example, declares that "the establishment of the college marks the beginning of a new era in our civilization, indeed, in the civilization of the world." "Hitherto there has been no Harvard, nor Yale, nor Amherst, nor Williams, nor Dartmouth, for woman. Now, thanks to Matthew Vassar, she has a college which in its advantages will be equal to any one of these." "Woman at once has a higher level, . . . higher hopes, higher aims, and labors with more confidence of success." "Honor then to the Founder of the First Female College!" He deserves a place above Harvard or Yale,

as an innovator. Dr. Jewett also receives a high tribute.

The New York "Tribune"¹ again recurs to it, tells of its progress, and calls the project "one of the milestones that mark the advancement of the age." In another paper it is said that "the eyes of the world and many previous hopes are turned toward it." It is difficult to overestimate the responsibility and opportunity of those who are to "mould and direct this mighty influence."²

It is interesting to note here a word from the "Friends' Intelligencer."³ The Friends have never limited woman, it reminds us, and in giving an account of the plan and the work in progress, it greatly praises it and extends the hand of fellowship on behalf of their communion.⁴

In 1864 we find many references to the college in "Godey's Lady's Book." In January there is a laudatory article on Mr. Vassar, with quotations from his first address to the Trustees. It has the authority of Mr. Vassar

¹ February 4, 1863.

² Scrapbook, without name.

³ April 18 and 20, 1863.

⁴ Scrapbook.

himself for the statement that the college is to open in September.¹ Moses Coit Tyler is quoted as to buildings, grounds, endowment, the home-plan of the college. "The enterprise is the initiative of a most important era in the improvement of humanity." The fear of some that "literary cultivation will injure the household virtues" is answered, the writer finding graver danger in dissipation and nonsense. The instruction in religion and morals, as the basis of its educational system, is regarded as the "distinguishing glory" of Vassar.²

The founder makes reference to this January article,³ and says our "secular paper has desired to print it."

In the February number,⁴ Jewett's new educational scheme is examined and its "one defect" is indicated. It may be easily amended.

¹ Vol. 68, pp. 93, 488.

² It is interesting to find the founder favoring "a uniform costume" "to be furnished by the college." (October 23, 1861.) He returns to this in a letter to Mrs. Hale (January 7, 1865), arguing that it would prevent jealousy and secure comfort and convenience. He consults her as to material. It must be inexpensive and would be used only for school hours and in exercise.

³ Letter, January 25, 1864.

⁴ *Godey's Lady's Book*, vol. 68, p. 199.

The author of the articles is a gentleman whose opportunities of understanding the subject he discusses have been of no common order. The plan and its advantages are stated chiefly in Jewett's own language. The grave defect is in the plan to have the President and all the professors men. The *assistants* will be women. This is disparaging woman. It must be that there are women capable of filling these places. No need to go back, with Jewett, to Deborah or Hypatia, or Laura Bassi, or Maria Agnesi. While the writer has no wish to urge women for political office, or for colleges for men, he recognizes this as a new condition. The President, now, should be a man, — Dr. Jewett, — but there should be a Lady Superintendent, and the instructors should be ladies if they can be found. This should be done for the encouragement, honor, and proper recognition of the sex. Vassar is an example.

The important February meeting of 1864 is referred to later.¹ Two questions had been left unsettled, it is said, — the title, as Mrs. Hale had been urging, should be amended by

¹ *Godey's Lady's Book*, p. 488.

the omission of "Female," and the appointment of men to the "Chairs." The writer of the earlier article had suggested a way to find candidates: advertise and ask testimonials; the result would be a surprise! The "editress" argues that young women must have a woman's influence, as in a home. No father is sufficient. If Vassar gives opportunity, women will come forward, as Eugénie de Guerin in France, so recently, or as Florence Nightingale in England. A strong plea is made against the use of "female" in the title of the college.¹

Once more² the magazine returns to the college, because the public feeling demands more information about it. So it quotes at length from the remarkable address of the founder to his Trustees in February and his great plea for women. "Let all women thank God for Mr. Vassar and take courage." The article is entitled "Vassar College: Woman's Own," and calls the college "the educational wonder." Finally, in July, it recurs to the subject, and

¹ Great praise is given to the proposed religious element in instruction, and to President Jewett, in the Boston *Recorder*, January 5, 1864.

² *Godey's Lady's Book*, vol. 68, p. 577.

gives an account of the Vassar Art Gallery. The college is called "the great philanthropic enterprise of the age." Dr. Magoon's report on the art collection is quoted at length, and he is termed "an elegant writer."¹

An adverse criticism appears at this time in the "Round Table" of February 27. It criticizes Dr. Jewett's educational scheme severely, saying that it is in bad taste as to language, florid, turgid, pedantic, where it should be simple, direct, and logical. It misrepresents entirely what study in a "School of Languages" would do, as it holds out promises that are never realized in our colleges for men unless in the case of a prodigy. The whole modern system of female education is objected to. Mental equality of the sexes is a miserable philosophical dogma. Woman is not equal to man, but superior, mentally and physically. The writer appeals to the Trustees to "banish the barbarous curriculum proposed which would work incalculable mischief." The nine chairs, "bristling all around with hard names," awaken commiseration and alarm — better

¹ *Godey's Lady's Book*, vol. 69, p. 84.

put the time into *belles-lettres* rather than into the unfeminine studies of metaphysics, mathematics, political economy, and dead languages, all of which represent unfeminine aspirations. Woman can do these things, but they are not properly for her.

Setting aside four out of the nine chairs, the writer adds a word on the occupants of the others, objecting decidedly to men. "Vassar Female College is a sphere of Venus, and no Jupiter has business there." Only women can educate women. "Who but Flora should preside in her own garden?"

The Committee also errs in its report in placing too high a cost on education. It will result in an education of an aristocratic element. Two hundred dollars is enough if the useless machinery referred to is dispensed with.

There is a long letter in the New York "World" of August 20, apparently taken from some other paper, and entered in the Scrapbook. The building is nearing completion and the report of Jewett on his plan leads the writer, "Jennie June," to discuss it in detail. High praise is given to it, but the various

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details of the educational plan are discussed and the possibility of the coming of co-education is mentioned, though the time, perhaps, has not yet arrived. The system of education, the use of the ornamental branches, and other such points are discussed, and there is a plea for high standards. The letter is an important one as bearing on public opinion at the time. The writer objects strongly to the plan for one-year courses, and to the awarding of diplomas for them, and claims that they will lower the standards of the college. She sees no reason for trying to train the students in domestic matters while in college.

One more reference, from another source, reminds us of the disastrous aftermath of that February meeting. The Newark "Daily Advertiser"¹ says the college is approaching completion, but that Dr. Jewett has resigned because of "irreconcilable personal differences."²

¹ June 11.

² References to the resignation are found in the local papers, but the causes leading to it seem to have been carefully concealed. The *Press* of April 25 reports a "rumor" of the resignation, and confirms it the next day, and the same item is in the

In 1865, just preceding the opening, we have some sharp criticism of an alleged important defect in the educational plan. In the January number of "Godey's Lady's Book"¹ the want of a chair of domestic science is challenged on purely practical and womanly grounds. Just such "practical" views of education as are urged to-day, at the expense of a broad and liberal education, as calling for preparation for some specific profession, trade, or occupation rather than for *life*, found expression then. The man with a limp collar and a poor breakfast is not satisfied because his wife knows navigation! Men's colleges, indeed, are *preparatory*, we are told, but a seminary for young ladies is designed "to complete the education of its inmates." The girl's college is to fit her for her profession, as the legal school prepares the lawyer! It would be well *now* for those who believe in equal advantages for women to ponder that statement.

In August "Godey" tells us that the college *Telegraph* of the 30th (a weekly). The Philadelphia *Ledger*, May 6, 1864, and the *Pacific*, San Francisco (same month), have favorable notices.

¹ Vol. 70, p. 95.

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will open the next month, and that there had been over a thousand applications, up to May 1, to enter "the first of the kind ever established in the wide world." The Prospectus is quoted at length and with approval, save in its lack of provision for domestic education.¹ It adds, later,² that its very particular attention to Vassar is due to the fact that "we consider it one of the most important interests of our age and nation." It says the college is not full, but it has standards, as female seminaries have not had, and its thousand applicants it has reduced to three hundred.

The "World" of September 6, 1865, indicates in an editorial the spirit against which the college, and perhaps every college at times, has to contend: namely, the associating of an institution too closely with the expression of some member of its faculty, the expression itself being often, as in the present case, grossly misrepresented. The title of the editorial stands, "Is Miscegenation to be taught in Vassar Female College?" Referring to the fine foundation that had been created, the

¹ *Godey's Lady's Book*, vol. 71, p. 173.

² Page 360.

editor remarks that there is reason for fear that "idiosyncrasies of certain members of the Board may bring it into danger." The President, it is said, has recently delivered a discourse, which has been printed, on "God the Perpetual Renewer," "in which the doctrine and practice of miscegenation, as understood by Tilton and Co., is advocated unmistakably and earnestly." Quotations follow, at considerable length, aiming to show that the Negro must have his rights, and these are twisted to the support of the contention of the editor. It must not be forgotten that this was a period of bitter feeling, and that the "World" represented at the time what was known as the "Copperhead" element, and therefore was apt to be particularly condemnatory of anything that looked toward the rights of the Negro. It adds: "Let parents who think of sending their young daughters to this institution make inquiries touching this matter," and assures its readers that the Northern public is not ready to have young girls and budding women taught this as a part of their educational course.

Though it carries us beyond the scope of this

volume, a few references may be added from an influential magazine ("Godey's Lady's Book") pertaining to the time after the opening. The matter of domestic science is again brought forward.¹ Evidently its special interest draws inquiries, which it refers to the college, calling it "this grand institution," and when referring to the first catalogue and the first half-year, it says, "The Editors of the Lady's Book do not keep the circulars for distribution." Praising the equipment, it admits that the descriptions may seem to their readers "like charming fancies."² It looks for the highest results in efficient life for women. "Only one exception" it makes. The college "bears on its façade the inferior title" (Female). Its faculty, it notes, has "eight gentlemen and twenty-two ladies." In the next volume³ it triumphs over the change of name, which it calls "one of the remarkable events of the year." It ranks Vassar alone as giving to girls such an education as colleges offer men,⁴ and to a query as to reasons for the preponderance

¹ Vol. 72, p. 278.

³ Vol. 74, p. 374.

² Vol. 73, p. 170.

⁴ Vol. 75, p. 354.

of men in the professorships, it answers that there are not yet enough prepared women, though it emphasizes the preponderance of women in the total teaching force.¹

This survey shows us that the general reception of Mr. Vassar's scheme was appreciative, generous, and even enthusiastic. It indicates the presence of skepticism, however, and such objections as have been urged in every time against liberal education for men as well as women. A more serious attack was to come a little later, after the college had settled to its work, and its results provoked inquiry and at last bitter conflict between the advocates of the higher education and those who challenged it on grounds of woman's alleged physical incapacity for the course, or her assumed mental limitations, or the fancied tendency of education to destroy social and domestic instincts and graces. That well-fought battle is outside the period that now engages us. Long ago it was won for the women's colleges, and their foes are now chiefly the laziness that comes with luxury, the fear of hard work, the impa-

¹ *Godey's Lady's Book*, vol. 75, p. 448.

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tience of the young to get at the occupations or the social whirl of life, and the lack of appreciation in parents of the worth to life of mental training and liberal education. The enemy is an old foe, if sometimes assuming a new face. But when Vassar opened, the enthusiasm of the welcome of those who longed for its privileges far outweighed the occasional criticism or the general indifference, and Mr. Vassar had every reason for cheer and happiness as he saw at last established, and by his own work and generosity, an opportunity which evidently answered a far-reaching demand.

VI

THE YEAR BEFORE THE COLLEGE OPENED

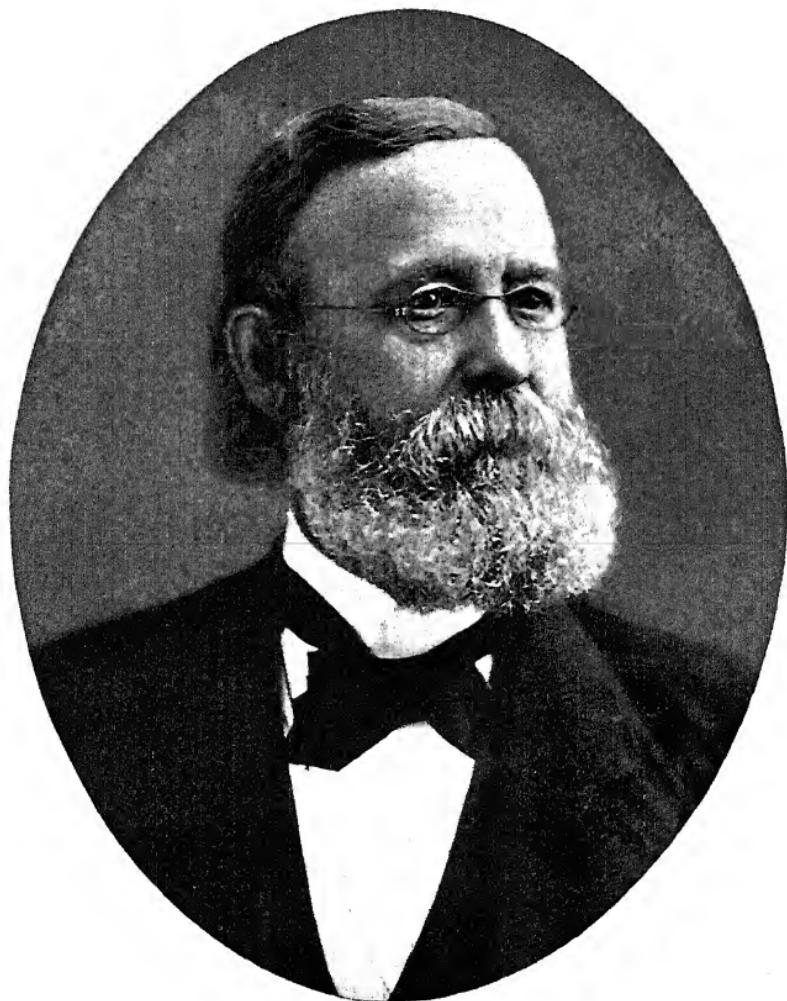
May, 1864, to September, 1865

AT the meeting of the Trustees in April, 1864, when Dr. Jewett's resignation was accepted, John Howard Raymond, President of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, was elected in his stead. He at first declined the honor. He had been a Trustee from the beginning, and was well aware of the difficulties involved in the almost herculean task. He had returned from a year's recreation and travel in Europe not wholly re-established in health, and had offered his resignation in Brooklyn in the conviction of his need of a complete rest from administrative labors,—though his Trustees had refused to accept it and had proposed measures for lessening his work. On the thirteenth of May he addressed to Mr. Vassar a remarkable letter (it fills over five printed pages in his "Biography"¹) in which he gives at length

¹ Pages 507-12.

the reasons for his adverse decision. It seemed to them then that the college must be opened in the fall and the time was too short for one not in full vigor. He had intended to take a year of rest, and knew that the exactions of the next few months would be extreme. But even if this objection could be met he could not accept the office at the compensation offered.¹ He tells Mr. Vassar that it would be difficult for business men, accustomed to daily exchange and mutual comparison of values, to appreciate what it cost him to write that, after a service to public education of nearly thirty years (nineteen as a college professor, nine in Brooklyn), during which he had never made terms for himself, never asked a dollar's advance, and never made the two ends of a year meet. He had met with generous praise, worked in large and wealthy communities, and at a constant pecuniary sacrifice. He closes his twenty-eighth year of public service "with impaired health, a family unprovided for, and an empty purse." Henceforth he cannot accept office without a compensation regulated by the

¹ Equivalent to \$3500.



JOHN H. RAYMOND
President of Vassar College 1864-1873

value of service and not by usage. But in his opinion the college resources would not justify paying the salary he needed (\$5000). The large sum given had been, to the regret of all, absorbed in material provisions, compelling economy at the very start and at the *vital* point. However, it should not be difficult to find a stronger and a better man for President on terms within its means.

One week later he writes to his wife: "As I feared, they are going to come to my terms." Mr. Vassar had declared his position "perfectly reasonable and right." But later, fearing that the founder had misapprehended his views, he determined on a personal interview and visited him at Springside. For the first time, he tells his wife, he was "brought into direct contact with Mr. Vassar's heart: it is as large as an elephant's and as tender as a babe's." His admiration of the old man's purity of motive and catholicity of spirit, combined with broad common sense and much business experience, calls out the remark, "If thine eye be single, it shall be full of light." The founder removed his anxieties as to future

endowment, and convinced him that the way was open for him to accept, and he wrote at once to the Polytechnic Trustees announcing his purpose.¹ What all this cost him one may read in the account to his wife of the reaction, the sick headache, and the day in bed amid the exquisite beauties of Springside. On the tenth of June, he addressed his formal acceptance to the Executive Committee. Mr. Vassar's satisfaction was hard to express. The last doubt and anxiety were removed "as to the assured success of our college."²

The Board met on June 28, 1864, and in his address the founder announces "the highly gratifying intelligence" "that the Rev. John H. Raymond, D.D., has accepted the presidency of our college on terms mutually satisfactory to both parties." In this same address is a reference to Dr. Jewett, not by name, — the only one made by him save those in June, 1866, of which we are aware, after the date of his resignation.³ He is referring to a disposi-

¹ *Life*, pp. 512, 13.

² Letter in Raymond's *Life*, p. 515.

³ These latter references were in connection with the use of the word "Female."

tion from the first to "lavish means unwisely," through lack of knowledge of necessary details, and says it was impossible for him ("from the state of my health") "to guard against all mistakes, especially those the earliest made, which properly belonged to one who, by long experience, knew, as I supposed, what was wanted in the line of his practice, but which mistake was not, until too late, brought to my notice. Still, it is believed that these difficulties are now substantially surmounted and at last removed."

At this meeting, Henry Ward Beecher was elected a Trustee; R. A. Fisher, the appointed professor of chemistry, resigned; the founder presented the art collection he had purchased from Dr. Magoon at a cost of \$20,000; and the opening of the college was definitely fixed for September, 1865, greatly to the satisfaction of the founder and to the gratification of the new President. The latter was instructed to prepare a "Prospectus" for the public.¹

It is well to note again what had been accomplished up to this time. The charter had been

¹ Minutes, June 28, 1864.

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granted in January of 1861, and ground had been broken for the building that very year. The supreme interest of the people was in the war, but nevertheless the operations of building the college went on, often hindered, indeed, by economic considerations due to the disturbed condition of the country, and involving at last an unanticipated draft on the generous sum which, it had been hoped, would endow as well as build the institution. Through these three years the Building Committee and Executive Committee had unweariedly, and amid constant anxieties, pushed the building operations, laid out the grounds, and prepared the physical equipment. In his address at this June meeting, the founder, who was chairman of the Executive Committee, gives us a glimpse of the work done and that in process. The college building was largely finished, but all the plumbing remained to be done, and the bell-hanging, and the furnishing. The observatory had been finished and arranged by Professor Farrar. Gas-building and boiler-house were in process. Contracts were out for furnishing the kitchens. The mere recital fails

to convey the truth: the gas apparatus, steam-boiler and pipes for heating, alone cost \$40,000. The enormous size of the building must be remembered if one would estimate what was involved for the men who were guiding the new experiment. Mr. Vassar did not exaggerate when he declared his doubt of another instance on record where so much had been done in a short period — and this was fifty years ago. The State Inebriate Asylum at Binghamton, smaller than the college, and begun about the same time, would require a year or two to finish; all of the colleges had required an average of “some twenty years to get fairly at work.”

Much had been done also on the academic side, — a museum established, an art gallery purchased, a general scheme of education discussed, a library begun, and many practical problems as to organization and appointments considered by the Board. Moreover, applications were pouring in, and success seemed assured. All were anxious to begin the actual work, and none more so than the founder, but his well-balanced mind suggested patience and

thorough preparation. The new President, also, while assuming no responsibility for deferring the opening, satisfied the Trustees that the true policy was to take ample time to perfect all arrangements. The founder was "vastly pleased" with the Board's decision.¹ He had been "almost worn out" by the "perpetual pushing, pushing to have the college started this fall" (1864), but had supposed Dr. Raymond "favored haste," and "had made up his mind to consent to a compromise on January or February next." "He told me, with tears in his eyes, that he felt a mountain lifted off his heart and thanked God that he had found a man who could not only understand his ideas but make other people understand them too." The meeting broke up amid "general interchange of handshakes and congratulations."² Evidently a crisis was passed, time was gained, and the satisfaction was felt in the new leadership that was so abundantly justified by events.

The new President had practically *carte blanche* in his planning,³ — a very natural

¹ Raymond's *Life*, p. 517. ² *Ibid.* ³ *Ibid.*, p. 520.

reaction after the recent strenuous and crucial events. His chief idea as to the province of the college was perfectly clear. It would offer "a liberal education" built on the best and most thorough training then attainable in "Ladies' Seminaries." The former notion of a school for "all ages," as Dr. Raymond interprets the original scheme,¹ working up through various schools to the full degree, — was abandoned. Jewett's plan was reversed. The new President had become convinced that a novel experiment for the new work was undesirable. A college for women would have enough to encounter without antagonizing every current view of a college, and the practicability of Jewett's scheme had by no means established its superiority by its limited trial in the South. Undoubtedly its adoption then would have hindered and fettered Vassar and would have added enormously to the burden of a new and untried faculty. Dr. Raymond, moreover, was abundantly familiar with current modes and discussions, and his professorships in Madison and Rochester, as well as his familiar-

¹ Raymond's *Life*, p. 519.

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ity with secondary school work, in Brooklyn, naturally inclined him to an adoption of systems in vogue rather than to the introduction of a scheme untried in the North. The result abundantly proved his wisdom. What he tells us later of the conditions of education of girls, as revealed through his first students, proves amply the requirement of a well-regulated course whose purpose, at first, was steady, regular, and compulsory training.

His scheme, however, was yet to be worked out. Prudently fortifying himself by a summer's rest, and after helping the Trustees of the Polytechnic to open the institution in September, he took up his solitary abode in Poughkeepsie, — for by himself he had determined to work out his plans during the months that would require much seclusion, much traveling, and great uncertainties. Almost at once, as illustrating the large and careful preparation for the great scheme, he met a committee of scientists, — Dana, Torrey, Hall, and "possibly Agassiz," — who had come to examine the "Cabinet" of scientific collections already made. Dr. Magoon was found at work, also,

hanging his pictures, and the copies of the "Masters" the college had purchased. The "Cabinet" was regarded by these gentlemen as of rare worth, and unsurpassed in America or Europe in its setting and arrangement. This was one indication of the high standards which had been set up. The great scale of the undertaking must be remembered in any discussion of the "originality" of the founder's idea.

Dr. Raymond set up his bachelor quarters in the "Northern Hotel," even then an old-fashioned house on the corner of Mill and Washington Streets, and long since removed, "a first-class country 'tavern' of the olden time, neat as wax, with good, savory eating and quiet, civil, and attentive service," and there he lived for months without sight of his wife and children, while working out the great problem and the way to meet it. His quiet was varied by trips in search of instructors and professors for the new faculty, a quest always of gravest difficulty, but greater than at any ordinary time, in view of this new work and the small supply of those fitted to begin it. Already by December he had settled on Pro-

fessor Tenney (natural history) as "sure for an appointment; and Miss Mitchell, if we can afford such a costly luxury"! The rest was more difficult. He knew what he wanted, but it was not easy to find it, and when found not always obtainable for a work which was not yet established and secure. In it all, however, he was sustained by Mr. Vassar's hope and faith.¹ Before the process was finished and he was ready to report to the Board, he wrote his wife that he was "thoroughly jaded with over-much talk and the incessant asking and answering of questions." "If I die suddenly, I think the 'crown'r's quest' will find, 'Died of Schoolmarm on the brain.'"²

The most important post, from his administrative point of view, and in view of the social, moral, and spiritual responsibility of the college, was the lady principalship. Nothing could mean more, nor so much, to the satisfactory conduct of the college, and nothing could be so significant of its policy for the future. It contemplated a social headship, instruction in manners and morals, religious leadership, a

¹ Raymond's *Life*, p. 531.

² *Ibid.*, p. 542.

close counselor of the President, and a prominent influence in the faculty itself.

President Raymond and Hannah Lyman had corresponded for five months,¹ before he was able to meet her in Montreal and definitely settle her appointment. They had exchanged views, written nobly of their ideals, questioned seriously the appointment of one of her age,² and reached the conclusion, justified fully by events, that hers was a divine call to a special mission at just that juncture in the education of women. She was the successful head of a school, with theories of training that remind one of Mary Lyon, and with a devotion equal to that of the saint of Holyoke. She was the rare woman for that hour, and no one can exaggerate the debt of the college to her in those years of the formation and fostering of its fresh ideals. She held far stricter views on amusements than the President,³ but both were catholic in their estimate of life,⁴ and her acceptance of the lady principalship was a guaranty of a sound, strong, conservative

¹ Raymond's *Life*, p. 537. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 554-55; cf. letter.

² *Ibid.*, p. 541.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 545, 546, 547.

administration of the college life at a time when a sharply critical judgment awaited every act of students or faculty.

Most important of all the President's labors was the plan of education which the college should offer. There was no faculty to discuss it and confer about it: in a tentative form it must be submitted to the Board at an April meeting, and at that time the public must be told of the scheme which the Trustees had indorsed. With Jewett's scheme before him, and with his long familiarity with college programmes in mind, he must face the question, then hotly discussed, as to special provisions for girls, and as to the possible adaptation to their needs of existing methods and curricula. He has summed up for us the conclusions reached in one of the most important educational documents submitted to the Vienna Exposition in 1873.

The founder, he tells us, left the question to experts, only demanding that women should have "the best," "the advantages too long monopolized by the other" sex. But just then the standards for young *men* were all unset-

tled. What *was* the proper function of a *college*? The champions of the "new education" were demanding a large place for the physical sciences; some were impugning the very value of a classical education; and all were urging larger individual choice.

But even if the question were settled for men, would the same answer be true for women? There were no *real* precedents, — only theories and speculations. Some boldly declared that young women were incapable, physically, of strenuous training; others maintained that there was "no sex in mind." "A large and increasing number of intelligent educators" took "middle ground." While holding that no amount of intellectual training could be injurious or prejudicial, they claimed that some fundamental principles stood out that should dictate modifications of the present system. While true that the better woman's training and the broader her knowledge, the better would she be fitted for life, it was also true that her constitution and life demanded special attention to sanitary conditions, to personal and domestic comfort, and to social

safeguards. From reflection on these issues Dr. Raymond gained "two or three starting-points."

First, there must be a complete domestic system. The ideal was family relation,—a home in which responsibility should be assumed for sanitary and social regulation of life as well as intellectual training. The character of the building and the business as well as the domestic organization must be determined by this viewpoint.

Second, the course must be liberal, not elementary. It must not be a higher seminary, but a real college.

Third, it should not be a servile copy of existing models. If any way could be found better to adapt the old methods to woman's needs, it must be accepted and used. There must be a recognition of real demands, but no lowering of standards. The claims of æsthetic culture were clear: was anything else? There was a strong urgency then of the claim of "practical studies"; but what are *practical*, and what not? Be it observed and emphasized, in reply to many assertions in these later years, that "the

fathers" had no conception of the special questions that their wise children are discussing, that the letters and papers of this early history of Vassar abound in references to the problem of a peculiar education *fitted for women*, and this first Board of Trustees, led by several very prominent educators of that time, sought to meet (as we shall see in the Prospectus) fancied necessities which time did not sustain as such. Not "a man's education for women," as has been too often and too superficially declared, was their purpose, but one *suited* to the *sex*; and their trouble was just that of their successors, the finding of such peculiarities as call for a different kind of mental training and different subjects to furnish the power of clear thought, mental efficiency, and broad culture.

Dr. Raymond had to meet another issue, then very popular, — the question of prescription or free election. We have already seen the plan of President Jewett submitted to the Board in 1863. Dr. Raymond, who was on the committee which permitted its presentation, tells us that some thought it unsuited to the

actual situation, fearing its free election of "schools" would be fatal to sound training, and that in leaving this important issue to the student, the college was shirking its responsibility. Moreover, public opinion must be taken into account. The college must have paying students,—for it had no endowments. This necessity bore on the policy and plans adopted.

The President concluded that a provisional plan was necessary, to be matured in the light of experience and after the testing of public opinion and want. Only the most general curriculum was possible till a fuller test could be made than experience had offered, of the preparation of girls for college and their demand for college education. The absence of references to the experiments already made is evidence that they had not made a great impression on the country. We shall see, in Dr. Raymond's later reflections on the actual conditions revealed in Vassar's opening year, how wise was his prevision, and how justified he was in setting standards that were regarded as insufficient and low three years after the college was at work. The college was singularly fortunate in

that its formation was committed to a man of highest educational ideals who yet recognized *facts* and adapted the offer of the new college to the actual conditions then prevailing in the training of girls. The fuller result of this thinking was set forth in the *Prospectus*. Now he was to meet his Trustees with the results of his laborious winter.

The Board met on April 12, 1865. The President's scheme was "received with universal favor and approval,"¹ and he was directed to prepare a *Prospectus* for the public, which embodied it. The Board voted to open college on the third Wednesday of September, the faculty to assemble September 1, "to arrange for the opening." The requisites for admission were fixed: English grammar, arithmetic, geography, United States history, or general history, algebra to equations of the second degree, Latin grammar, reader, five books of Cæsar, French grammar and half the reader, and proficiency in English indispensable. These were low,—but must be compared with the standards of 1865, and not with those of to-day. That they

¹ Raymond's *Life*, p. 551.

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were too high for the standard of female education *then* was soon apparent enough, and Vassar was driven to establish a preparatory department.

The time of vacations was arranged. A plan had commended itself to many which contemplated vacations in the winter, from January to April (three months) and in the summer, — the month of August. This was urged on grounds of “health, convenience, and utility”; the maintenance of a “just proportion between the periods of rest and labor”; the securing “for collegiate uses the largest possible amount of that season which, in our climate, is the most propitious.” The founder thus argues in his address,¹ especially urging the advantage to health in our rigorous climate of escaping these harsh months. He devotes the principal portion of his address to this subject. The Board, however, voted to abide by the existing usage in America, which was “the probable expectation of the public.”

The classes were to be called first, second, junior, and senior, though it is noticeable that

¹ April 13, 1865.

in his first annual report to the Trustees, Dr. Raymond wrote freshman and sophomore. The usage, however, persisted in the Catalogue till 1872-73.

The Board voted that the departments be "respectably" equipped before opening, to place the high standing of the college beyond question. There were to be nine professors, besides instructors, and written contracts were to be made with all.

The rates were fixed at \$350, without extras, except music and art, which were \$50 each. This was changed to \$400 in 1866 and so remained till 1905-06. Any surplus was voted to reduce the bills of excellent indigent students. This resolution was rescinded in 1868.

Professors Knapp, Farrar, Tenney, and Mitchell were now elected. The founder agreed to advance a sum not to exceed \$25,000 to secure the opening and the first year.

One other subject had come close to his heart. Again and again during two years Mrs. Sarah J. Hale had urged the removal of "female" from the charter name of the college. A large correspondence had been carried on,

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and already, as we have seen, a resolution to make the change had been defeated in the Board. Now the founder suggests the propriety of the change, and leaves it to the Trustees. It is suggestive of the conservatism of the Board (probably enough, complicated with legal timidity as to the danger of subjecting the charter to revision by the Legislature), and of the freedom of its action in view of a living founder as well, that the motion to change the title was again defeated at the regular June meeting by a vote of 11 to 7.¹ The founder, however, lived to see the change made by the Legislature in 1867. He had made an earnest plea for it in his address to the Board in June, 1866.

The account of this important meeting should not be closed without reference to the opening sentence of the founder's address. "Just four years ago to-morrow," he says, "we staked out the ground for the foundation of our College, a day which was made singularly memorable by the Fall of Fort Sumter." He refers to the desolations of the war and to the

¹ Minutes of the Board.

progress through these terrible years of this great enterprise. He was, perhaps, too near the event to see how wonderfully his new foundation was to answer the fresh demands of American womanhood which had been developed and encouraged by this very war.

Now "half the burden," the President wrote, "was off my mind."¹ Certain stakes were driven to which he could work, and plans were reduced to definiteness. He was longing for the actual work and escape from the "terrible cloudland of solitary speculation."² He had been separated from wife and family for four months, and his affectionate nature was strained and he was lonely. He was leading a life of busy routine, breakfasting at seven; after a brisk walk into the country and back, disposing of his great mail; meeting constant callers; "chatting with Father Vassar who tries to let me alone but cannot"; walking again for a half-hour before dinner; working through the afternoon till half after five; and taking then "my glorious evening tramp" "instead of supper, which I have eschewed,

¹ *Life*, p. 552.

² *Ibid.*, p. 557.

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much to my inward salubrity.” The country about enchanteth him. Then he would have a long evening of work, and frequently a stop on the way back to his rooms “to break bread and cheese” with Mr. Vassar. But he is at times “savagely homesick.”¹ It took more than the founder’s sacrifices to organize the great work.

Now his first business was to issue the Prospectus, and then to complete his appointments before the June meeting of the Board.

The Prospectus, an adaptation of his report to the Board in April,² is important not only as giving us a closer view of the problems already discussed, but as a revelation of what seemed to Dr. Raymond especially demanded by the public and needful for it to know. It is a printed document of thirty-six pages. It declares that the college seeks “not a feeble imitation of the ordinary college curriculum,” but a general coincidence in the elevation of its aims. It states the purposes of the college in a full, but carefully analytical, style.

First, physical education is fundamental and peculiarly important to women, though sadly

¹ Letter to his wife, *Life*, p. 554.

² *Life*, p. 552.

neglected among educated American women. The college will provide rooms, food, hours of study and recreation under careful sanitary regulation. It will give ample facilities and regular instruction in exercise, and will secure a gymnasium training, encourage outdoor sports, calisthenics, riding, and open-air study and instruction.

Second, the intellectual training will be liberal, *for women*, a *regular* course, for four years. While the ordinary college curriculum will furnish a guide for the "essentially similar" intellectual faculties of girls, constitutional differences, intellectual and moral, will be kept in view. The offering of too much, the bane of seminaries, will be avoided. The required studies will be those of universal importance, and the elective will be guided by the judgment of President and Faculty. Special courses will be offered especially for such as have long ago completed the then possible studies. The regular branches will be English, Latin, French or German, algebra, geometry, natural philosophy, botany, zoölogy, mineralogy, geology, physical geography, anatomy and physiology

and hygiene, outlines of history, theoretic and practical ethics. A generous line of electives is offered in all the customary college branches, but none in history.

Third, moral and religious education has the “foremost place.” No sectarianism will be tolerated, but Trustees and founder wish the college to be “a School of Christ.” The President and Lady Principal are charged especially with the responsibility for this. There will be training in the President’s classes in ethics and evidences, daily chapel, morning and evening, religious services on Sunday, Bible classes, social religious meetings, private interviews with those in difficulty who wish to seek President or Lady Principal, and parents may designate some Christian minister as special adviser. There will also be voluntary associations, missionary societies, sewing-circles, and kindred organizations.

Fourth, domestic education. The household is woman’s peculiar province. She ought to be an “accomplished housekeeper” if she hopes “to be recognized as a thoroughly accomplished woman.” But home is the school for this. The

Trustees are satisfied that a full course cannot be successfully incorporated into a liberal education. But the college has responsibilities to teach a correct theory of household management and to give some practical training in such domestic duties as admit of illustration in college life. It will teach domestic economy theoretically by textbook and lecture, and illustrate it in its kitchens, pantries, and table-service. Where needed, it will give instruction in care of clothing and room, in neatness, order, and taste. The students will do no servants' work, but will superintend the work in their rooms. There will be regular sewing-hours for all.

Fifth, social education. It is "hers to refine, illumine, purify, adorn." The methods of social training will be womanly. No encouragement, therefore, would be given to oratory and debate, which appeared mannish at that time. Reading aloud would be encouraged, recitations from the poets, *tableaux vivants*, and conversation. The college promised the public to seek in its officers models and examples. Debating societies were pronounced "utterly incongruous."

ous and out of taste.”¹ The Lady Principal would watch manners and correct faults.

Music would be encouraged, — social singing and the rudiments of vocal music for all. There would be practical lessons in decoration of rooms, and bearing on dress, jewelry, gardens, parterre of flowers, furniture, etc. Soirées and receptions were also promised.

Sixth, professional education. The resources were said to be few, but the spirit willing. There might be a course of lectures on teaching, but examples of good teaching were assured in the instructors. The means of instruction in “the peculiarly feminine employment” of telegraphy were at hand. Phonography would be taught and the lecture rooms and daily chapel would furnish opportunities for its exercise(!). Bookkeeping would claim attention for its general principles, and if it was found practicable it would be carried far enough to insure a respectable introduction to a counting-room.

One suspects that much of this was urged by the founder as “practical” rather than by the

¹ Prospectus, p. 20.

trained expert, the President. It is at least interesting to note the absence of reference to such opportunities, professional and domestic, in the earliest catalogue of the college.

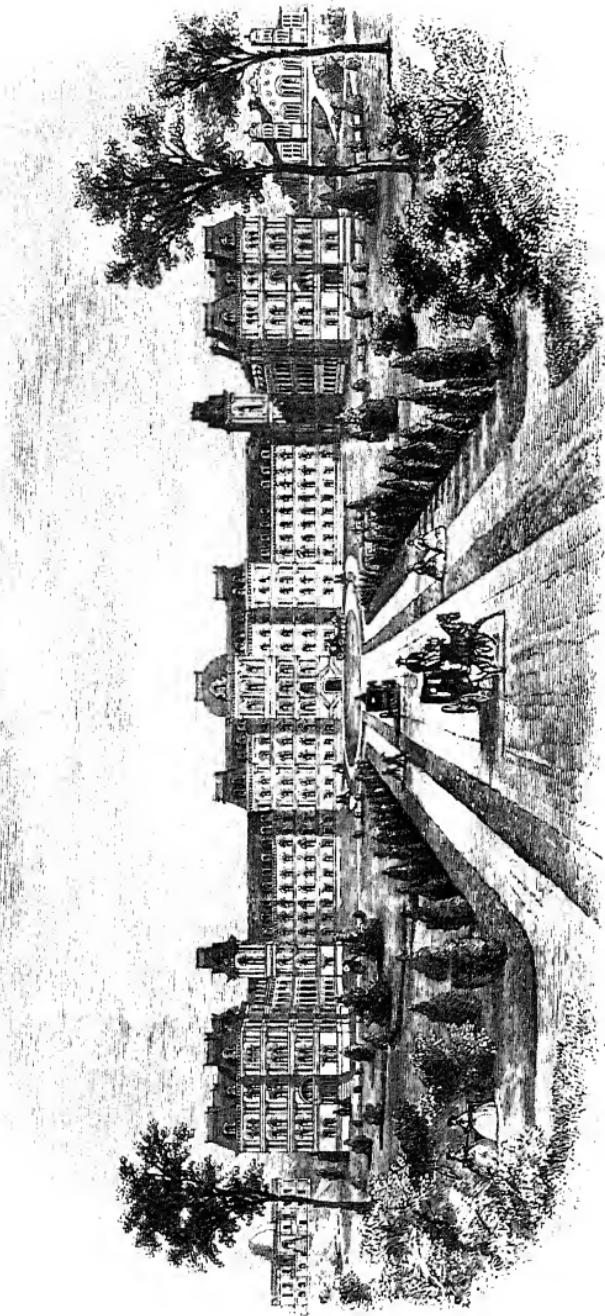
The Prospectus further gave details of the equipment and the faculty. Descriptions follow of kitchens, gardens, farm, and laundry. Rates are fixed provisionally. There are no extras, but sufficient charge must be made to meet running expenses. The use of the permanent investment of about \$500,000 is free to all. Riding, be it noted, was offered at \$40 per year.

Reference was made to the discussion of vacations and the Board's decision not to depart prematurely from usage, the conditions of admission stated, applicants warned that more than one thousand letters had been received, and that they must apply before June 15, that day students would not be received, and no pupil under fifteen.

The college thus made its bow to the public little more than three months before it opened its doors to the students.

The regular meeting of the Board convened in June, on the twenty-seventh. The founder

reminded the Board that it was their last meeting before the opening, and recognized "the favoring Providence" that had brought them through the preparatory stages, through "the stormy period of war," which, had they known the difficulties it would involve for them, might have stayed their hands from the undertaking. All this they looked back upon and might well thank God and take courage. The building is ready, "the park" has been laid out and graded, seeded, and planted with shrubbery, shade trees, and evergreens. The drives and paths have been mapped. The farm is in order and the vegetable garden planted. And now he claims the right to lay down his office as chairman of the Executive Committee which he had held, and filled, for four years. For the business done, his training had fitted him; but now, he claimed, the responsibility would involve larger experience with educational institutions. He will retire with perfect satisfaction, and during the remainder of his life, "now surely drawing to its close, I shall look with assured confidence, by the Divine blessing, for the steady development and final success of this



VASSAR COLLEGE: OBSERVATORY, MAIN BUILDING AND MUSEUM

From a print in an old Catalogue

the dearest object of my hopes.” “I retire, gentlemen, from my office and trust,” he continued, “thanking you kindly for your generous counsels and support hitherto.”

One cannot overestimate the service given in the actual building of the college by this man of extensive and large business experience. Through all these years the Building Committee and Executive Committee had held weekly and often semi-weekly meetings, inspecting the work, adjusting contracts in that difficult and often ruinous war-time, studying every detail of a vast and complicated structure, — investing the money, spending it to the best advantage, investigating new schemes for light and heat, purchasing apparatus and furniture, expending almost a half-million dollars with care and great result. It was a day of justifiable pride when the old man could thus lay down his office with the sense that his part of the great problem was solved.

Nathan Bishop was elected in the founder’s place. It is worthy of note that the President was never a member of the Committee until 1884–85.

Miss Lyman was now elected Lady Principal; Delia F. Wood, of Boston, to the charge of Physical Training; a teacher of art was nominated, but the nomination was referred to the Committee on the Art Gallery, and the name does not appear in the Catalogue. Timothy H. Porter was elected professor of rhetoric, *belles-lettres*, and English language (this name also is not in the earliest Catalogue); the appointment of teachers was authorized and referred to the Executive Committee. The Board adjourned, and little remained now but to fill a few places and await the new students. The President had borne an extraordinary load during this year of exhausting preparation, and generally with great courage and faith, though at times in despondency and anxiety.¹ There was a great unknown factor looming up, shadows of doubts and visions of failure, not to be wholly dispelled till the college had ceased to be a thing of theory and pulsated with its throbbing young life. At last came the opening day, September twenty.

It requires little imagination to picture the scene as the young women from all parts of the

¹ *Life*, pp. 557-58.

land gathered and filed up the long avenue from the gate-house. Some came as school-girls, to another seminary or boarding-school, as it were, fancying in some vague way that this was a new step forward for them. Some came as to a Mecca, a holy place to whose opening they had looked forward as a sign of opportunity and progress for their sex. All must have come with great curiosity to see what had been proclaimed through the land as a college for women so equipped and officered as to furnish for the first time in human history an education equal in grade to that bestowed on young men. One alumna who entered college that day, and who was later to become Maria Mitchell's distinguished successor, writes that all seemed to be in good preparation and order; that a feeling of happy cheer prevailed among the girls, and kindness and thoughtfulness among the officers: Miss Lyman, strong and serene, Miss Mitchell, brusque and brilliant, but always kind, — all ready to make adjustments in rooms and room-mates, and all courteous and hospitable to parents and friends.¹

¹ Letter from Mary W. Whitney, January 25, 1913.

Another tells of the omnibus ride from the station to the college door, — the waiting, solitary and forlorn, till asked if she had seen Miss Lyman; the welcome, the impressiveness of the Lady Principal, the preliminaries finished, and then the exploration of the new institution,—girls everywhere and their kindred to the fifth degree of cousinship. Then tea (supper) was served, and chapel followed, when the founder sat beside the President, with “shining face,” “as the face of one who comes again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”¹ The writer recalls the words of one of those students, later Lady Principal of the college, who told of the joy with which she approached the Main Building, her face wreathed in smiles as she felt that at last her hopes were to be realized.² There were nearly three hundred of them, certainly an enormous aggregation of girls for that epoch, and the numbers reached a maximum, that fall, of three hundred and thirty.³

President Raymond’s letter to his wife, that

¹ Martha S. Warner, in *Vassar Miscellany*, February, 1889.

² Abby Goodsell. ³ Raymond’s *Life*, p. 573.

day, describes all as working very smoothly, "a splendid day, and the buildings and grounds alive with people." Already over two hundred had come as he wrote, and they "had dined" three hundred people in the hall "quite comfortably." It argues well for a careful organization that he sat in his sanctum, busy with his papers, answering such questions as were brought to him. But "poor Miss Lyman" was so hoarse she could scarcely speak, though "smiling as the day and strong as a lion." "Everybody would like to have the best room. . . . A few are exceedingly pertinacious." That is to say that human nature is constant.

On the following Saturday, however, he was "very tired," — with his first sermon just before him. "It seems like a dream," he writes, — "the sudden transmutation of this great lumbering pile of brick and mortar, which hung on my spirit like a mountainous millstone, into a palace of light and life." He had succeeded, Friday evening, in getting out for the first time, after dark, about nine o'clock, and had walked to the lodge and surveyed the great building from there, and then walked about it.

“On every side it sparkled like a diamond.” “Everywhere . . . merry voices were heard in conversation and song. At the rear pianos were going, and you would have thought the building had been inhabited for years instead of hours.” “The work of reducing this beautiful chaos to order is, of course, great, and we are now at it.” His fears had been disappointed, and he was “working with a happy heart” under his great burden, — for be it remembered, this was not an opening of an old institution, but the beginning of what, in its proportions and conditions, was a new experiment.

The founder had “only just lived through it. He is almost sick of joy.” Here was the fruition of his labors, — the realization, at last, of the idea which had moved his heart for ten years past. No words can picture what that opening day must have meant to him.

But how did it impress the community? It must be recalled that though this great building had been erected through four years, it was two miles away in the country from what was then a provincial and slow Dutch Hudson River town, and was not connected with it by

any public conveyance. Moreover, Mr. Vassar was but a citizen who had grown up in the town, and whose great idea was received with doubt by many, with indifference by most, and with approval and appreciation by few. The coming and going of the Trustees, semiannually, occasioned little remark, and there was no effort on the part of the authorities to seek publicity. For example, after the most important meeting of April, 1864, the "Telegraph" reports a "rumor" that President Jewett had resigned. It is in a very brief paragraph,—and the files in general do not abound in local news. War items are naturally of chief interest. So there seems to be no reference whatever in this weekly journal to the opening of an institution that was to be the city's chief claim to national and international recognition.

The "Eagle" of September 21, however, has an article on the subject. "Yesterday," it reports, "was the appointed time for opening Vassar Female College, and as the building has at length been finished and the preliminary arrangements made, we suppose operations were

commenced. The politeness and courtesy of the managers having been entirely exhausted in paying attention to strangers, they had none left for our own city people; and hence the only announcement to the public from which authentic information could be obtained was an advertisement for servant-girls. . . . It was a very peculiar way of letting folks know that a great educational institution was completed and about to begin its career. . . . We do not know whether any public exercises were held or not, but presume there was a ceremony, a report of which we will in due time be requested to copy from the Pumpkinsville Gazette, or some other equally interested newspaper." It reports, further, a large number of strangers in town, and adds, "Judging from appearances the college will start well filled with an intelligent and earnest class." "The opening does not promise much, to be sure, but we hope it will nevertheless prosper."

The prophet, evidently, was not without honor, save in his own country. It was many years before the city awoke to the fact that Vassar College was not only its chief title to

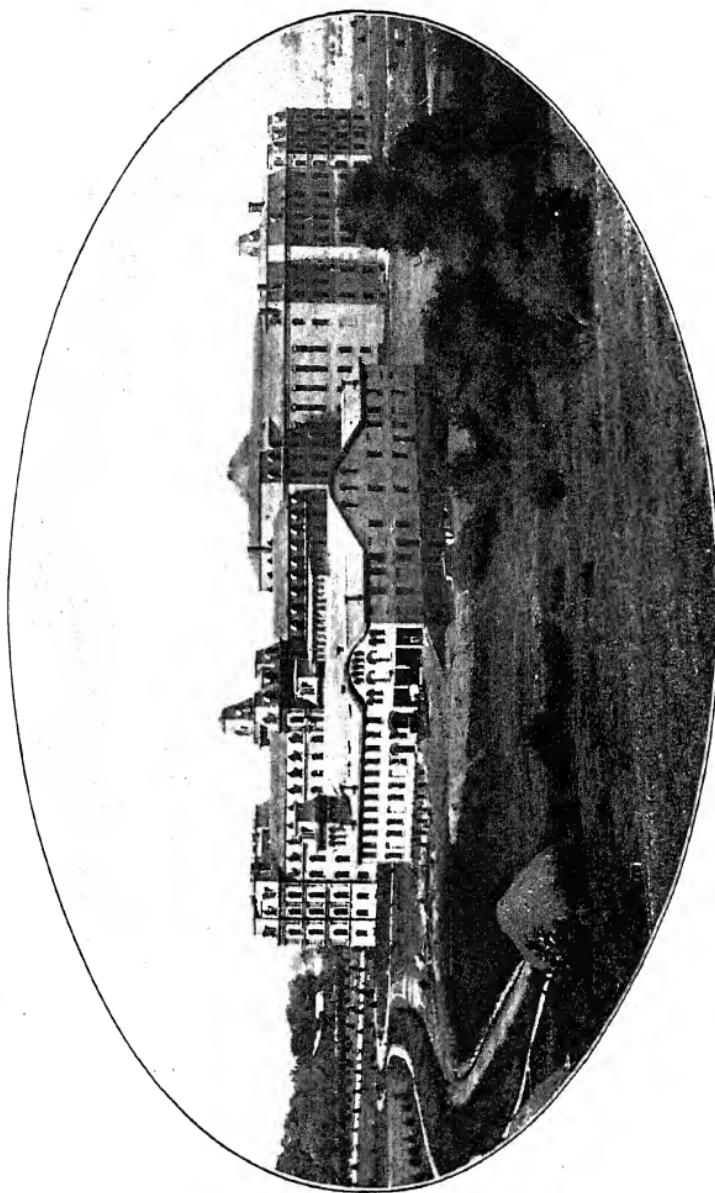
fame, but was also one of its chief commercial assets.

We have already seen from the reports of Dr. Raymond in April of 1865, and from the *Prospectus*, what were the ideals of education which the new college aimed to realize. The requirements compare fairly with the average college of 1865, but are inferior to the better ones, and they were set, be it remembered, as distinctly *tentative*, in the light of the necessity of preparation of girls for actual collegiate standards. Not for three full years was the curriculum itself to be really established on a firm basis, — and it was, indeed, about 1870 that the colleges in general found themselves rearranging, improving, and advancing their work. But now, the final question concerns us as to the condition of the education of American girls which the opening of Vassar discloses in 1865. *Was the standard of the new college high enough for the time*, and was its curriculum broad enough?

Happily, we have the manuscript of Dr. Raymond's report to the Board for the first year of the work of the college, made in June,

1866. It contains the very material essential to a just answer of the question, some of which was later embodied in the great Vienna pamphlet of 1873, already referred to. The report shows a contrast with the ideals of the Prospectus. The year had passed without disaster, though filled with problems of administration, with adjustments of a new faculty and a new student body, and new economic, academic, and social issues. Circumstances had called for the prevention of haste and of premature decisions, as much as for progressive steps. Adherence to the conditions of the Prospectus would have reduced the numbers one half, and have made the task easy. Why was it not done? Because they had built a huge building and spared no expense to provide excellent living conditions and a large academic force, and the war had so exhausted their funds as to make numbers essential. They were obliged to be patient and create a constituency, and themselves do preparatory work which could not then be done in the schools of the country.¹

¹ The following, though dating from an earlier time, is suggestive in this connection: "As female teachers will not be



VASSAR COLLEGE FROM SUNSET HILL
Main Building and Museum, also used as the Riding School

So the girls came, ranging in age from fifteen to twenty-four, and sporadic cases yet older.¹ From New York came 174 *during that year*; from other Middle States, 47; from New England, 59; from Western States, 55 (California was represented: there was no transcontinental railway yet); from Southern States, 6; from the District of Columbia, 4; from Canada, 7; from Hawaii, 1.² In grade they reached down from college juniors to a status for which the President had no measure. The majority were within a year of freshmen, if not indeed freshmen, but their education had been uneven, irregular, unsystematic, and some were unbelievably untrained. The general preliminary training was superficial, unpreparatory, — and

employed to conduct the education of pupils far advanced, and as their mode of instruction is believed to be better adapted to the infant mind, the same degree of knowledge of geography and English grammar need not be required of them that is exacted of males." (Laws relating to Common Schools in New York State, September, 1841.)

^{—1} One who entered then, fourteen years of age, tells of her impression of the old age of some of the students, and mentions one "elderly woman" who said she had come because she wanted to be as well educated as her son who was then growing up. (From Mary W. Whitney's letter.)

² First Catalogue, 1865-66.

in the Vienna report it is characterized as a "wretched sham."¹ No class arrangement was even possible, and the adjustments of work involved an extraordinary amount of labor. The demand for special courses, along the same lines of irregularity which cursed girls' education everywhere, was very great, and "even female young America" was found to have "a will of her own." The aversions and excuses were innumerable. They were unwilling to submit to training and lay foundations. A "large proportion" was forced into preparatory work for the first half-year. The better ones were not neglected, and all worked toward a *regular* course.

. As Dr. Raymond looked backward, in the

¹ One may recall Thackeray's letter from the famous Miss Pinkerton, of Johnson House, Chiswick, to Mrs. Bute Crawley, who has asked Miss Pinkerton's recommendation of two governesses. The letter contains the following recommendation which gives us some suggestion of the claim of an aristocratic school in *England*: "Either of these young ladies is perfectly qualified to instruct in Greek, Latin, and the rudiments of Hebrew; in mathematics and history; in Spanish, French, Italian, and geography; in music, vocal and instrumental; in dancing, without the aid of a master; and in the elements of natural sciences. In the use of the globes both are proficients."

Report of 1873, he remarked upon the zeal and diligence of these girls, — though their plans of study showed little coherency and no conception generally of the subjective conditions of mental growth and training. The parents, meanwhile, dwelt on the value of chemistry for cooking and French for a tour in Europe. The type has not yet entirely changed! The need impressed on all examiners was “regulation authoritative and peremptory.” Something intelligent and fixed was more essential just then than a perfect system.

But the brains of the institution, Dr. Raymond declares, were enlisted on the side of right ideals, and he bears testimony, in the 1873 Report, to the great help received from the steady purpose and high demands of these students. In short, the opening year was an “omnium gatherum,” — an ill-assorted body of students which only served to prove the great demand for real education, and the need of a provisional course till order could be brought out of chaos. This condition endured till 1868, when all was replanned, and a steady advance made possible; but at the end of the first year an attempted

classification gave 1 senior, 5 juniors (4 conditioned); between juniors and sophomores, 13; sophomores, 29 (19 conditioned); between sophomores and freshmen, 22; freshmen, 66 (24 conditioned); preparatory, 22. The improvement was rapid, and the *college* classes in 1872-73 numbered 235 students.

That first year was a great crisis in woman's education, and it was met in the spirit of an educational statesmanship which bent itself to the necessities of actual conditions, while urging as far as possible its ideals, with intent to accomplish them. It marked the President, as all his subsequent career established him, as the man of the hour, fitted to guide this great venture to a success even more marked than the founder had seen in his dreams. And the founder! He may well have been "almost sick with joy." A plain man, he had won a fortune by his thoroughness, his attention to business, his purpose to have nothing but the best. Intelligent, with a strong, clear intellect, his thirst for knowledge had made him a reader of good books, — especially of the poets then in favor, Pope, Cowper, Young, — and a diligent

reader of the Bible, which colored his language and doubtless affected his strong, simple, and vigorous style. He was kind-hearted, though rigorous in business matters, a friend and helper of schools and the church. He was broad and catholic where others were "shallow or narrow in policy,"¹ cautious and exact, but with a large outlook. He loved the beautiful in nature and surrounded himself, at Springside, with the creations of the best-known of American landscape artists. His interest in the education of women was the product of years, awakened by his niece, fostered, encouraged, and focused by Dr. Jewett, until it became the key to all his thinking, and moulded afresh and deepened and broadened all his character, until Matthew Vassar the founder was a greater and diviner man than Vassar the manufacturer and merchant. As his thought took form, he gave to its realization all the benefit of his wide experience, and all the wisdom of his enlarged and invigorated spirit. As the cost increased with the exactions of war-times, his courage and steadfastness gained, and all the

¹ Raymond's *Life*, p. 520.

exhausting cares of those years, which were often punctuated by days of illness and physical depression, — all the wearisome detail of building, and equipment and planning, all the hours of counsel on schemes for making broad and strong the foundations of a great educational work — increased his joy in life and added to the happiness of his final days. Down to the end his interest was unabated, and his thought was fresh and stimulating and catholic. When his final hour arrived, he sat among his chosen councilors, reading his annual address, at the Commencement time of 1868, in the parlor of the great building to which he had consecrated his thought and wealth. He had discussed the financial outlook of the college and several matters of business organization, the erection of a hothouse for flowers, provision for Mr. Giraud's gift and houses for professors, and a projected public road which he feared would affect plans he had for the college property. He had just opened up the question of instruction in domestic economy, when his manuscript fell from his hands and he sank back and expired. When, an hour later, the Board reconvened,

this final paragraph of his address was read to them:—

And, now, gentlemen, in closing these remarks, I would humbly and solemnly implore the Divine Goodness to continue His smiles and favor on your institution and bestow upon all hearts connected therewith His love and blessings, having peculiarly protected us by His providence through all our college trials for three consecutive years, without a *single death* in our Board or serious illness or death of one of our pupils within its walls. Wishing you, gentlemen, a continuance of health and happiness, I bid you a cordial and final farewell, thanking you kindly for your official attentions and services, not expecting, from my advanced years and increasing infirmities, to meet you officially again and imploring the Divine Goodness to guide and direct you aright in all your counsels and social business deliberations.

So he died among his own. The college had taken the place of his deceased wife. A childless old man, he passed out of life while hundreds of adopted daughters were gathered about him, and a generation called him friend and benefactor.

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